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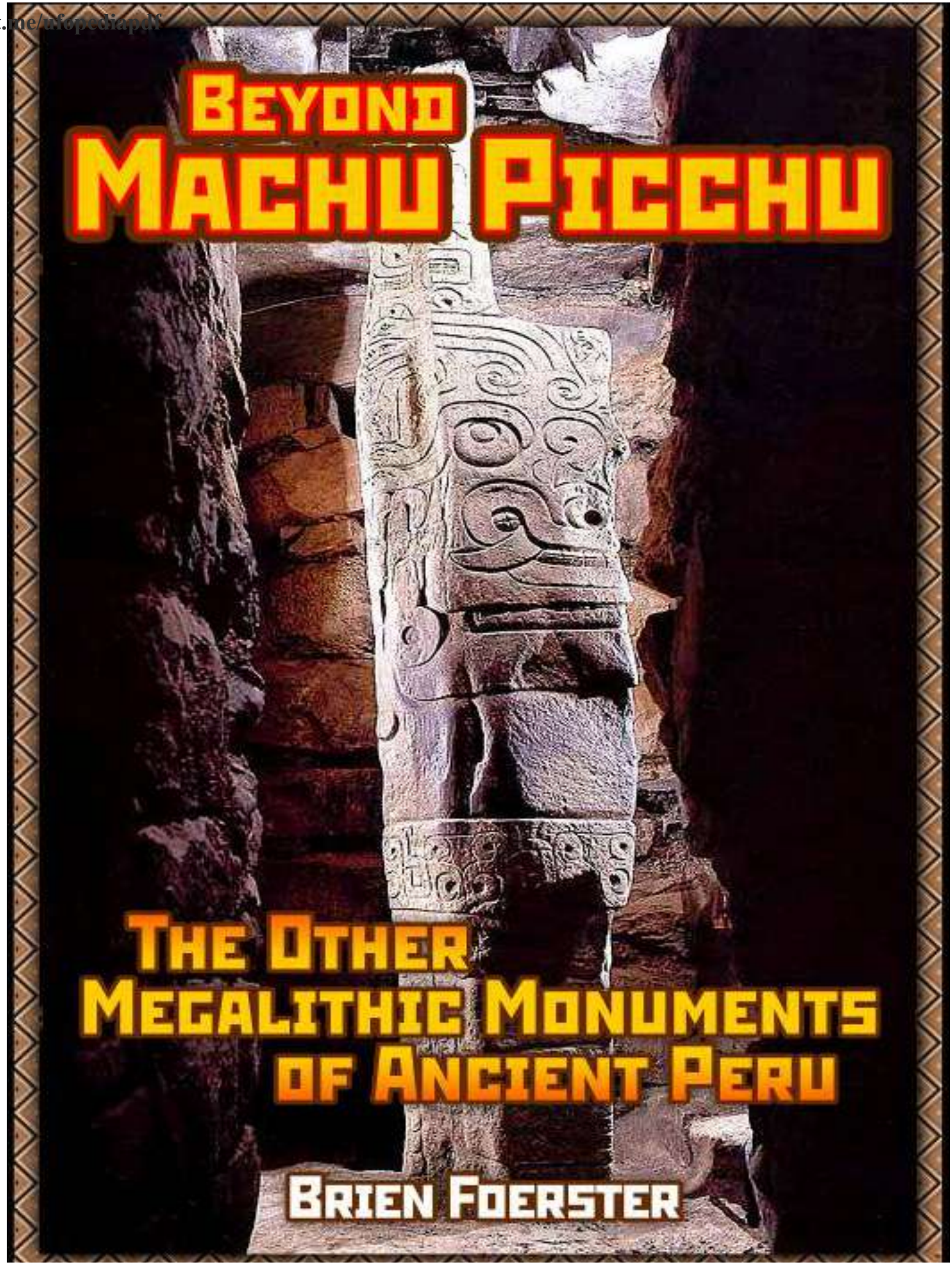

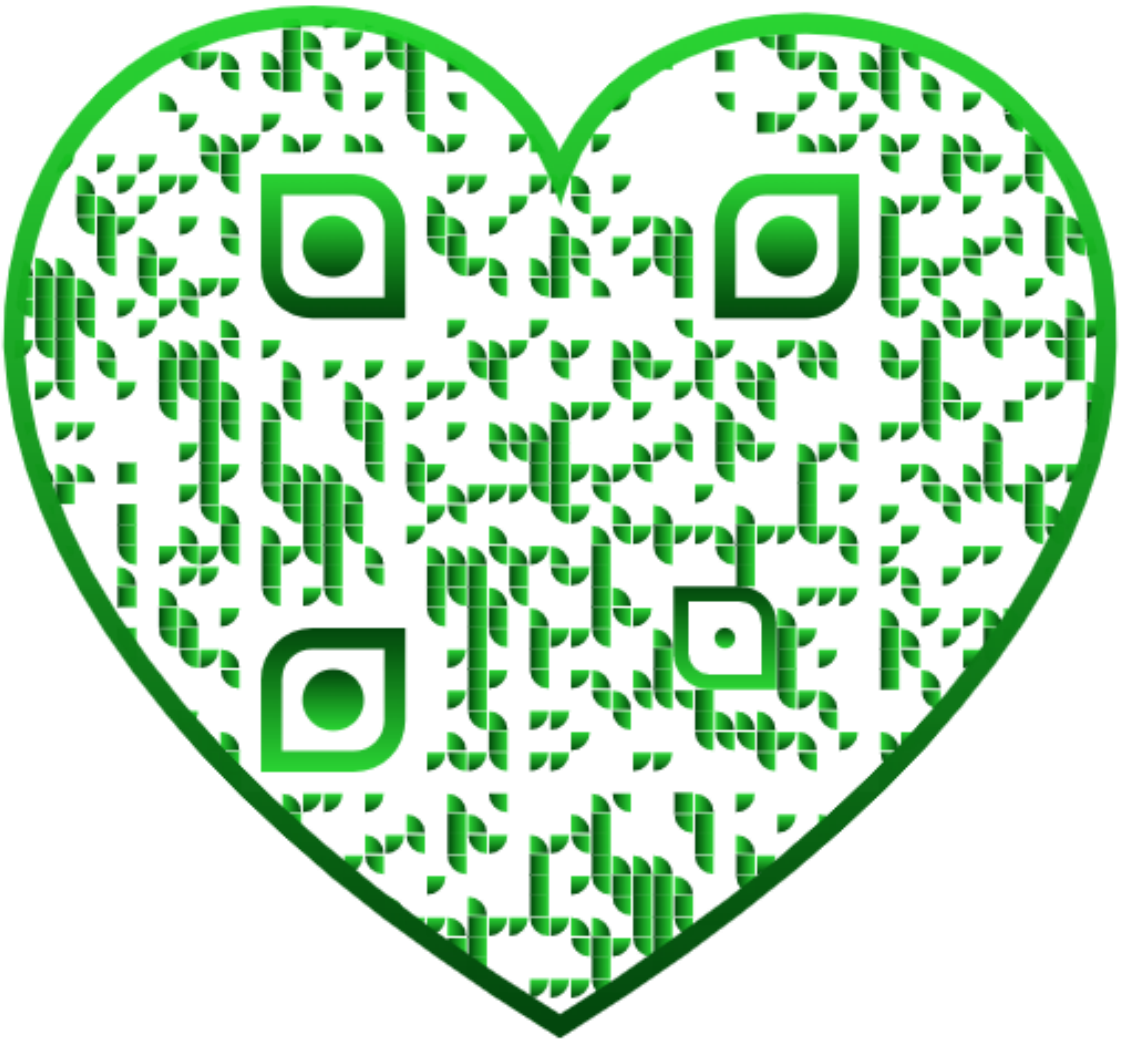

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Beyond Machu Picchu:

Other Intriguing Monuments Of Ancient Peru

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Dedication

My thanks to the ancestors of all of the great cultures of Peru, well known, and lesser known, for at least leaving behind for us traces of their glory. Many people, Peruvians included, seem to think that the Inca were the only great civilization of pre-Hispanic Peru, and with this book I hope to shed light on the other great peoples who populated this land. To my own ancestors I give thanks, as well as my father and mother who encouraged me along this road of inquiry, education, and respect for cultures other than my own. And to my dearest Irene, whose heart beats with the souls of those who came before her in this great land, and for the glow on her face when she shares with me the wonders of ancient Peru.

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1/ Introduction

Before we get into the adventure that is pre-Spanish Peru, I wish to offer you these tips that will make your arrival comfortable, your journey safe, and your whole experience one of ease and delight. Most people from abroad only visit Peru once; usually this is because it is a long and expensive journey by plane from Europe, North America, or Australia. In order to maximize the time and experience for these mainly these travelers, I have decided to write this book. Having visited Peru multiple times, and now living here, I think I am experienced enough to give enough helpful suggestions to make your visit to this country, and perhaps a side trip to Bolivia, the best it can be. I have written this in a style which is basically a timeline; from getting on the plane, to arrival, through the visit, and then departure. The majority of what I will speak about pertains to the history of the country, as in the Inca, etc, so this is not really a “holiday” guide as such.

When one thinks of Peruvian history, especially pre-Spanish occupation, which began when Francisco Pizarro and his “conquistadors” arrived in 1532, the Inca spring to mind. However, though the Inca were a mighty and highly evolved culture which played a huge role in the history of Peru from about 1200 AD until their demise at the hands of the Spanish, there are many other cultures which are almost as fascinating. From the Tiwanaku, or Tiahuanaco, who lived just over what is now the southern border close to Lake Titicaca, through the Chimu, Moche, Paracas and Chachapoyas, one could easily spend a month in Peru exploring historical wealth that goes back thousands upon thousands of years.

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This book acts as a cursory guide to the cultures that left a living legacy through which we have a window into the past…

2/ Before You Leave

Please don't get paranoid, just be precautious. The obvious things to prepare for a trip to Peru, or in fact any country that you are not acquainted with, are: passport, plane ticket, money and medical. Peru has been called a "developing country" etc., but it is in no way primitive. However, the farther you go from the key centers, mainly Lima, and Cuzco, the more "rustic" everything becomes. Some basic planning on your part will make sure that you not only have a pleasurable and educational experience, but that you will probably leave wanting to come back.

3/ Passport

Very few, if any citizens of major countries need to get a visa to enter Peru; to make sure that this is the case with you, check your government's web sites, or http://www.expatperu.com/vrequirements.php, which is an excellent resource. In general, travelers can visit Peru for up to 183 days, and the visa is provided once you enter customs and immigration at Lima International Airport. The IMPORTANT thing to state to the customs official is how long you plan to stay in the country. If you say "about 3 weeks" then they will give you, probably, exactly 21 days. So, when in

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doubt, overshoot your estimated visiting time by at least twice that which you are considering.

The reason for this is that extensions to visits are no longer available inside Peru; if you originally planned to say, again as an example 3 weeks, and decide to saty another week, you have to leave the country in order to get an extension. Aside from being inconvenient, this can also be time consuming and expensive, because you will either have to fly out of the country, to Bolivia, Brazil, or Ecuador for example, to one of the major border towns, such as Piura in the north to Tacna in the south, or take a VERY long bus ride to one of these places.

The visa I refer to is solely a tourist visa, if you plan or are considering working in any capacity in Peru, this is a very complex and somewhat expensive matter, as regards paperwork and government permission, and should be dealt with via your embassy.

4/ Plane Ticket

This may sound obvious, but do make sure that you have either a return plane ticket from your home country, country of embarkation, or have one which will fly you on to another country before your tourist visa expires. Some people have successfully entered Peru, via the Lima International Airport with a one-way ticket, however, the customs officer does have the right, by law, to ask to see your on going ticket, and if you refuse to provide it or don’t have one, you can be immediately be deported, at your own expense.

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Not only would this be an expensive mistake on your part, but it could result in future travel restrictions or even a ban on your future visits to the country. Also, be aware that the vast majority of the customs officials speak little if any English, and certainly will not have any knowledge of other languages. This is a phenomenon that travels face in this country in general, only about 5 percent of the general population speaks any foreign language in Peru, and English is of course the most popular. If you stay in 5 star accommodations in Lima or Cuzco, you will of course find staff that speak English, and probably quite well; the same is true of major tour companies in Lima and Cuzco. However outside of these two central locations, don't count on any assistance except in Spanish, and more specifically Castellan Spanish.

5/ Money

Carry cash? Sure, why not? The American dollar is by far the favoured foreign currency to use for exchanging into the Peruvian currency, the Nuevo Sol (new sun.) Now of course you don't want to carry a lot of cash with you as you walk the streets, but securely kept in a hip wallet, not worn on your person is a good idea.

Travelers checks are another option, but have to be cashed at a bank; you will have to have your passport and possibly even other ID as well with you, and that is a hassle. They are quite a safe option, but again, they are a hassle. There are of course bank machines, where international debit and credit cards work. These are located in all of the major banks, as well as at the airports, some bus terminals, and major shopping centers. The ones which are at the banks are of course the

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most secure, such BCP, BIF, ScotiaBank and InterBank, whereas the privately owned ones can be suspicious as to security.

In general, I recommend that at least 25 percent of the money you bring should be in the form of cash, and only US dollars, or Euro; other currencies may be accepted, but are a hassle. The Canadian dollar, for instance, though it is worth more than the US one at the present time, is rarely accepted, and when it is, at a reduced rate of 70 to 80 percent what a US dollar brings. And don't buy Nuevo Sols outside of Peru; you will not get a good exchange rate, especially at International Airport currency trade booths, which are often a rip off.

Money can also be traded on the street; the people who do this are usually located outside of banks and airports, but be weary, they can offer you counterfeit bills. What, you say, fake money? You bet, Peru is one of the largest producers of counterfeit US dollars and Nuevo Sols in the world, and some are very close to being perfect copies. However, every shop owner and hotel staff member in Peru knows how to spot a fake bill for the real thing, so do the smart thing, change money at a bank.

How much to carry? That is always a good question; the basic policy is, bring with you about the amount of money that you think you will use in one day. This may mean $25 for some, and $100 for others; it depends on what you are doing, and your expectations as regards food, etc. Crime is not what some people say it is in Peru; most people who say that it is a dangerous country for travelers are people who have never been there, or "I heard someone say" sorts of folks. Ignore them; they have no clue of what they are talking about. Peru is in general quite safe, the government is stable, and a legacy of Christianity,

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though it has had some negative results, has instilled in most Peruvians a strong adherence to the “10 commandments.”

Exceptions to the above are some (many) neighbourhoods in Lima, and late at night in any town, in general. Police presence, especially in the tourist areas of Lima, which are very clean and upscale, and the entire city of Cuzco is easy to observe; much of Peru’s economy is tourism, and so the government wants to make sure that travelers are, as much as possible, protected from the occasional local idiot that wants something for nothing.

Most hotels, especially 3 stars and up, have safes located in each room, or you can leave your valuables with the front desk. Make use of the “safe” option more than the front desk is my advice; and if you choose to stay in a very cheap hotel or hostel, away from the main center of Lima or Cuzco, then you are on your own, and could fall prey to a sad situation…pay the extra money if at all possible.

6/ Medical Help

Bring international travel insurance; that is a given. For the relatively low cost of coverage, from a fall, heat stroke, dog bite or even heart attack; the price you pay will give you peace of mind, and in general, a good policy will be a few dollars a day. The problem is; how do you get compensated for what may be an up front; out of pocket expense. To answer this, ask the travel agent or insurance broker that you get your policy from.

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Medical care, in general, is both inexpensive and relatively good in Peru. World class? If you want to pay for the best yes, but I am referring to the average person, who, say for example, gets a cut or suffers from sunburn or an upset stomach. Any parent is proud of their son or daughter should they decide to choose medicine as a career, or for that matter become a dentist or lawyer as well. As such, there are many doctors in Peru, and visiting them is surprisingly inexpensive. I can ‘t quote actual fees here, but let us say that general practitioner can be visiting for about 20 dollars per visit, and specialists are about the same.

The larger cities, especially Cuzco and for sure Lima, also have large hospitals and clinics which are at least partially funded by foreign governments and or non governmental organizations (NGO.) In general, foreigners can access the services provided by these institutions, and often for the same cost that Peruvians pay.

And the pharmacies are absolutely great! The two most common names they go by are Botica and Farmacia, and you will usually find one on each block, especially in Cuzco and Lima, as well as most other cities in Peru. Here you basically get any medication you can think of, from cold remedies, to antibiotics, etc. Each shop has at least one pharmacist, who will prescribe for you based on the symptoms you state! No doctor needed, nor a prescription. I actually witnessed a young Peruvian girl asking for pain reliever for a cold she had, and then asked, by the pharmacist if she thought she had an infection as well, she said yes, and was also sold antibiotics!

Not, of course, that it is a wise thing to simply buy whatever you think will cure what ails you, but it is awfully convenient to have the option.

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One of the most important pills you can take if visiting Cuzco and Machu Picchu is a locally available pill called Sorochin; excellent for preventing and relieving “Soroche,” which is the Peruvian name for high altitude sickness. Almost everyone suffers from this to some degree, because the most common way to get to Cuzco and Machu Picchu is by plane; in doing so, you travel from sea level at Lima to about 12,000 feet in altitude in the time of 1.5 hours or less. It normally takes at least 24 hours for the body to adapt to this, no matter how many vitamin supplements or cardio vascular exercise you have done to prepare for it prior to your arrival; but more on this later.

7/ What Clothes To Bring?

In a word; “layers.” Peru is a relatively small country, at least compared to Canada, where I grew up, but it does contain every climatic zone in the world, from arctic (Andes) through to desert (mainly along the coast), tropical jungle (the Amazon) and even areas that look like Switzerland and California! Most visitors tend to see Lima for a short time, and spend the bulk of their time in Cuzco. Lima has a climate similar to Los Angeles, t-shirt weather in the summer, and sweater weather in the winter. Rainfall is so minor in Lima and along the coast of Peru in general, that a waterproof jacket is not required. Don’t forget that you will be in the southern hemisphere, so the seasons are the opposite of North America and Europe.

Cuzco, on the other hand, being at 12,000 feet in altitude, can display all four seasons in one day; in the winter at least; hence, layers are the best option. Clothing, especially sweaters made from Alpaca are readily

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in Cuzco especially, as well as great Alpaca socks; and deals can be had. Also, a rain jacket is a smart idea, especially one that “breathes.” Day time temperatures in Cuzco tend to average 18 to 23 C. and sun is the norm, however, the months of December through February are described as the “wet season” and it can, on occasion, rain all day.

Cuzco is also, don’t forget, in the highlands of Peru, as in just below the great Andes mountains, and so the terrain tends to be quite hilly. The city itself is akin to San Francisco, some areas are flat, especially around the central square, called the Plaza de Armas, while others are inclined. Nothing too difficult though. Comfortable shoes are a must, as in running shoes or hiking ones; high heals will not work here, especially on the cobble stone streets!

8/ Sun Block

In a word, yes. Lima is about 10 degrees below the equator, and when the sun shines, it can be at least mildly intense; Cuzco, being at around the same latitude and 12,000 feet elevation, has very little ozone protection, and even dark skin may burn if it is not protected. Major name sun blocks are available in Lima and Cuzco, but you do pay the same price as you would if you bought it in North America or Europe; why this is I can’t figure out. Maybe because most Peruvians don’t have light skin and therefore don’t use it?

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9/ Leaving The Airport

The Lima Airport, officially called Jorge Chavez International, after a famous Peruvian aviator who was supposedly the first person to fly over the Alps in Europe successfully, is rapidly becoming the hub airport for all of South America. It is very modern, and the services that it offers are of international quality.

If you are being picked up at the airport by a friend or associate, that is great. The airport, like many airports around the world, is not in the nicest part of the city; in fact, it is in another city, called Callao, which is the industrial area of Lima. This is also where the major seaport is located, and is, shall we say a “working class” neighbourhood.”

10/ Where To Stay And What To Do In Lima (For The Visitor Interested In History)

The only good and safe hotels in the whole Lima/Callao area are in the Miraflores neighbourhood of Lima. This is about a 40 minute to 1 hour taxi trip from the airport. It is possible to take buses from outside the airport itself, but I strongly advise against it. If you speak no Spanish, or even some, this area is not safe. You could easily get lost, and run into trouble in more ways than one.

A taxi is by far the best way to get to Miraflores. You may have actually booked a hotel room in central Lima via the internet, and that is ok and reasonably safe, but Miraflores is by far the best option. The climate and surroundings are kind of a cross between Los Angeles and Miami,

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minus huge high rises, and does have a very contemporary feel. Located a few blocks from sea cliffs, it is a good area to stay, and stroll about and shop, mainly in the day, but is also quite safe at night. The taxi drivers will, plain and simply, attempt to rip you off financially, and this is the case throughout Peru; when they see a foreign face, they automatically assume that you are rich. Clearly, Peruvians watch too much American television, and think that shows like “Dallas” and “Dynasty” are real.

As such, they will probably say that a cab ride to Miraflores is 25 or 30 dollars. If you feel like throwing money away, or are too tired to barter, go with it. However, the real price, charged to Peruvians is more like about 10 to 12 dollars. I strongly suggest that you act as though you expect local prices, in a gentle enough way. Even if the driver only agrees to go down to 15; you have saved money. And do insist that you are dropped off at the door of your hotel, or at least in the brightly lit Parque Kennedy. Believe me, again, the bus system is NOT a good option.

Those visitors who want to taste Peruvian specialties such as Ceviche, which is a delicious raw fish dish flavoured with lime juice, peppers, and raw onions, can find the best examples here. Seafood is amazingly delicious and varied in Peru, especially on the coast, where the cold Humboldt Current from Antarctica draws up nutrients from the lower depths of the ocean and results in one of the most productive marine environments in the world. The same seafood dishes are also available in Cuzco, but since the fish has to be trucked or flown inland from the coast, it isn’t as fresh. McDonalds anyone? Yes, that as well as Burger

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King and most of the other American franchise fast food outlets are here too, for better or worse; your choice.

The cost of accommodation of course varies a lot here. There are “backpacker” type places around Parque Kennedy (yes, named after JFL) as well as everything else up to 5 star hotel; this is where the internet can help you find some options that fit your budget.

So how long to spend in Lima, and what to do while you are there? Most people stay less than 24 hours in Lima and its environs, eager to race to Cuzco and Machu Picchu. But Lima does have a lot to offer, and is good for at least 2 full days of exploring. For example, as has been hinted at earlier, the Miraflores area, centered at Plaza Kennedy, is great for shopping, dining, and staying. There is quite a huge Native art and craft market, composed of 100s of individual stores which are clustered together. It is called the Mercado Indio, and simply ask at your hotel front desk where it is.

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MERCADO INDIO IN MIRAFLORES

Stick with the listed prices? No…everything in Peru, aside from restaurant food (though you can try by asking for the “menu” which is the Peruvian’s budget meal option) and hotel rooms (again, you can try) is negotiable, especially when it comes to buying clothes and souvenirs. As a general rule, the prices in the Mercado Indio are at least 20 percent higher than what you can wind up paying, and I mean at least; if the merchant says “10” you should respond with “5,” they will then probably say “8” and then you say “7.” The final deal will probably be struck at “7.”

If you wait until you get to Cuzco, even better deals can be had; the rents in Miraflores are the highest in the country, hence the prices are

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also high. There are also some large museums in Lima, but in many cases the buildings in which these collections are held are more interesting and informative than the collections inside! The National Museum is especially true in this way; a massive concrete architectural masterpiece, but very little of historic interest on display.

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National Museum of Peru

The Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Peru is a somewhat different matter; it is the largest and oldest state museum in Peru, located on Plaza Bolívar in the Pueblo Libre district of Lima. It is perhaps the most visited museum in Lima, located at the heart of

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Pueblo Libre. This museum is known for having one of the best pre-Columbian exhibits in the world. It offers incredible Paracas textiles and a huge selection of pottery. For directions, ask at the front desk of your hotel; it is best to take a taxi there and back, about a 15 minute trip each way, as the bus system in Lima is cheap, but very confusing.

The grounds of the Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology and History

As far as I am concerned, the best museum in the whole area is the Larco; a private establishment, but reasonably priced entrance. It is located again about 10 to 15 minutes by taxi from Miraflores, and definitely worth a visit if you like beautiful ceramics.

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The beautiful entrance to the Larco Museum

The Larco was founded by the Larco Hoyle family in 1926, on the grounds of their Lima estate. It now occupies practically the entire property and is a oasis of quiet, calm, and architectural beauty in the relative chaos of Lima, a city of 10,000,000 people.

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The grounds of the Larco

Today, it houses the finest collection of pre-Colombian ceramic and gold objects in all of Peru; the amazing collection of Moche culture clay works being greater than 275,000 pieces…on display! And the gold and silver masterpieces are truly amazing; contrary to popular belief, the Inca were not master gold and silver smiths, at least not as great as the Moche and Chimu people from the north of Peru. It is quite probable that once the Inca absorbed these cultures into the Inca confederation, called the Tahuantinsuyu (Four Corners Of The World) they were hired to make great works for them.

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A small portion of the Larco ceramic collection

The Larco Museum or Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera is located at: Av. Bolivar 1515, Pueblo Libre. Lima 21, Perú. They can be contacted at: Telephone (00511) 4611312 - (0511) 4611835 or Fax (00511) 4615640.

The best one day tour of the best that Lima has to offer is a bus tour that starts at Parque Kennedy and takes you to through the neighbourhoods of Miraflores and San Isidro through to the center of historic colonial Lima. This is where the cathedral, government palace, and other beautiful “old world” buildings are located, within a block or two of one another, all close to the Plaza de Armas, or central square.

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Plaza de Armas in Lima

The bus service I recommend is called Mirabus, which I have taken, and brought visitors on. In the case of the your we took, which included both the Miraflores and colonial Lima areas, it also took us to the Larco museum. Mirabus also offers night time tours, and other ones of the area.

The other area of Lima which is good to visit and is close to Miraflores is Barranco; which was the wealthy neighbourhood of the capital city prior to the existence of Miraflores. Much of the latter is, or at least has the look of being 20th century in appearance; there are areas which have beautiful houses of “art deco” style design, harking back to the

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1920s and 1930s, up to very flashy steel and glass office towers. Barranco, on the other hand, is distinctly 18th and 19th century.

The famous Puente de Los Suspiros (Bridge Of Sighs)

It is about a 5 to 10 minute trip by taxi from Miraflores to Barranco; and though I can't quote an exact figure, in Soles, as to the cost, use this basic rule of thumb, here, and anywhere you travel in Peru by taxi; pay about 60 percent of the first quote that the taxi driver states. For example, if he (or the occasional she) says that Miraflores to Barranco is 10 Soles, insist on 6. If he says no, wait 30 seconds or less and flag down the next taxi, as there are thousands of them in the Lima area.

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The beautiful library in Barranco

Like many cities, especially in Europe, Lima has a “Bohemian” artsy area, and that is Barranco. Some of the beautiful buildings are in a perfect state of preservation, while others are a little run down, but I personally like that mix; it gives Barranco a comfortable atmosphere without the feel of being too “clean” or “perfect.” The fact that it is

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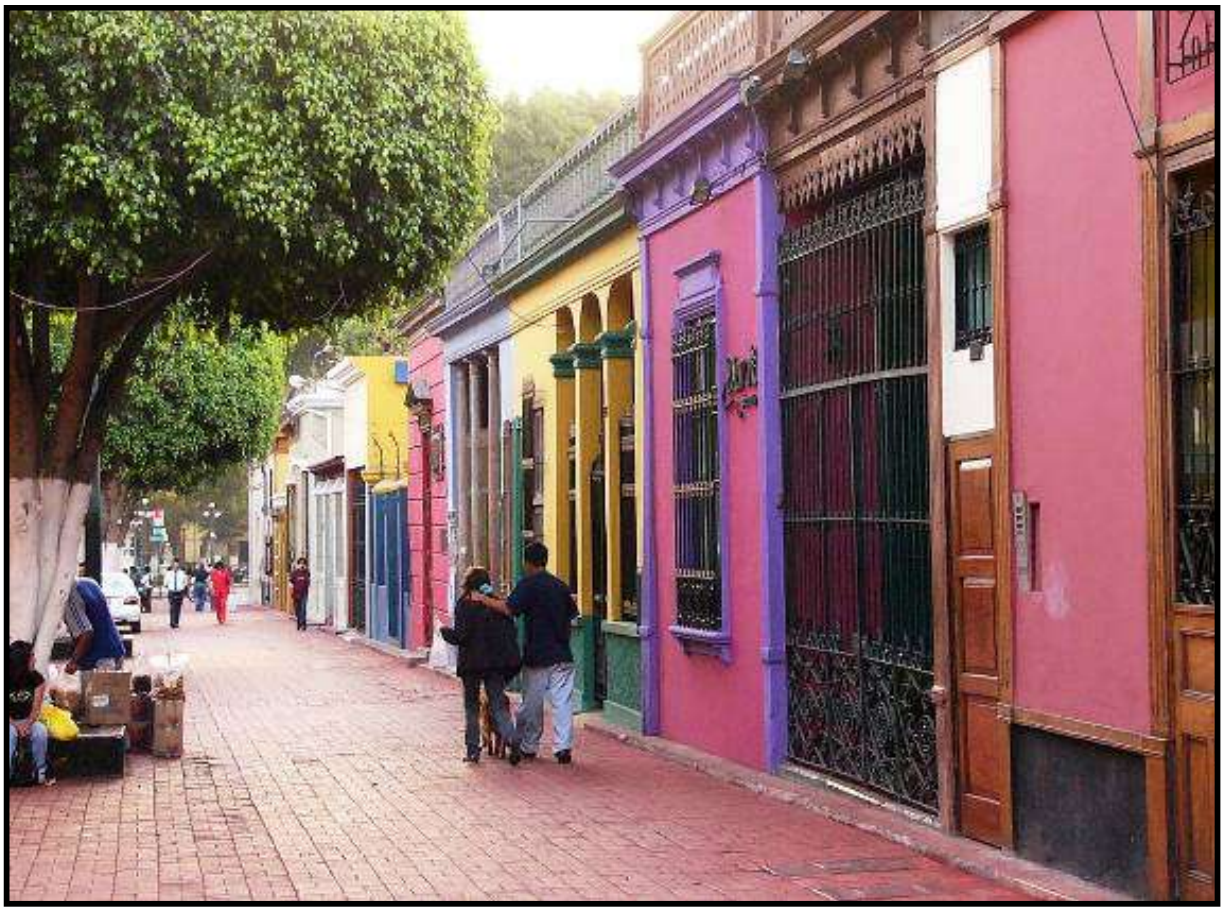
quite a small area also makes it feel cosy, and is right next to the ocean, on sandy sea cliffs.



Very bright colours give Barranco a tropical feel

So what else is accessible to the visitor interested in culture? The trappings of Spanish and European ancestry abound, from other museums catering more to this genre, as well as plays, music etc. I have no experience nor interest in these, and so have no opinion. In terms of pre-Colombian sites, however, how about pyramids? In Lima? You bet. In fact, less than 10 minutes by taxi from Parque Kennedy is one of the best preserved adobe pyramids in all of Peru.

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The district of San Isidro is right next to Miraflores, and here we find the Huaca Pucllana pyramid complex. The Huaca Juliana, or Huaca Pucllana', is a great adobe and clay pyramid built from seven staggering platforms. It takes its name from the Quechua word “pucllay,” meaning “game,” which in its entirety can be translated as “a place for ritual games.” It served as an important ceremonial and administrative center for the advancement of the Lima Culture, a society which developed in the Peruvian Central Coast between the years of 200 AD and 700 AD.

View of a small section of Huaca Pucllana

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Close up of the adobe construction technique

There are other pyramid complexes in the area as well; near San Marcos University in between Lima center and the airport, which is difficult to access, and remnants of several smaller pyramid like structures at the Parque de Leyende, in the Lima area.

11/ Pachacamac: Lord Of The Earthquake

The temple of Pachacamac, known as the “Lord of the Earthquake” is an archaeological site 40 km southeast of Lima, in the Valley of the Lurín River, across the Panamerican Highway. Most of the common buildings and temples were built c. 800-1450 CE, shortly before the arrival and conquest by the Inca.

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A temple at Pachacamac simply known as “Ramped Temple”

To date, several pyramids have been uncovered; archaeologists have identified at least 17 of them; though many, especially those with adobe exteriors have been irreversibly damaged by the *El Niño* weather phenomenon). Besides pyramids, the site had a cemetery and multicoloured fresco of fish from the so called Early Intermediate period (c. 200-600 AD). Later, the Huari, or Wari culture (c. 600-800 AD) constructed the city, probably using it as an administrative center. A number of Huari-influenced designs appear on the structures and on the ceramics and textiles found in the cemeteries of this period.

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The immense Temple of the Sun

The Temple of the Sun, which is one of the largest structures here, and somewhat reconstructed, was completed by the Inca, but on top of at least 2 earlier temples. The lowest exterior walls have traces of red paint, presumably from the first period of construction.

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View of the Island of Pachacamac from the Temple of the Sun

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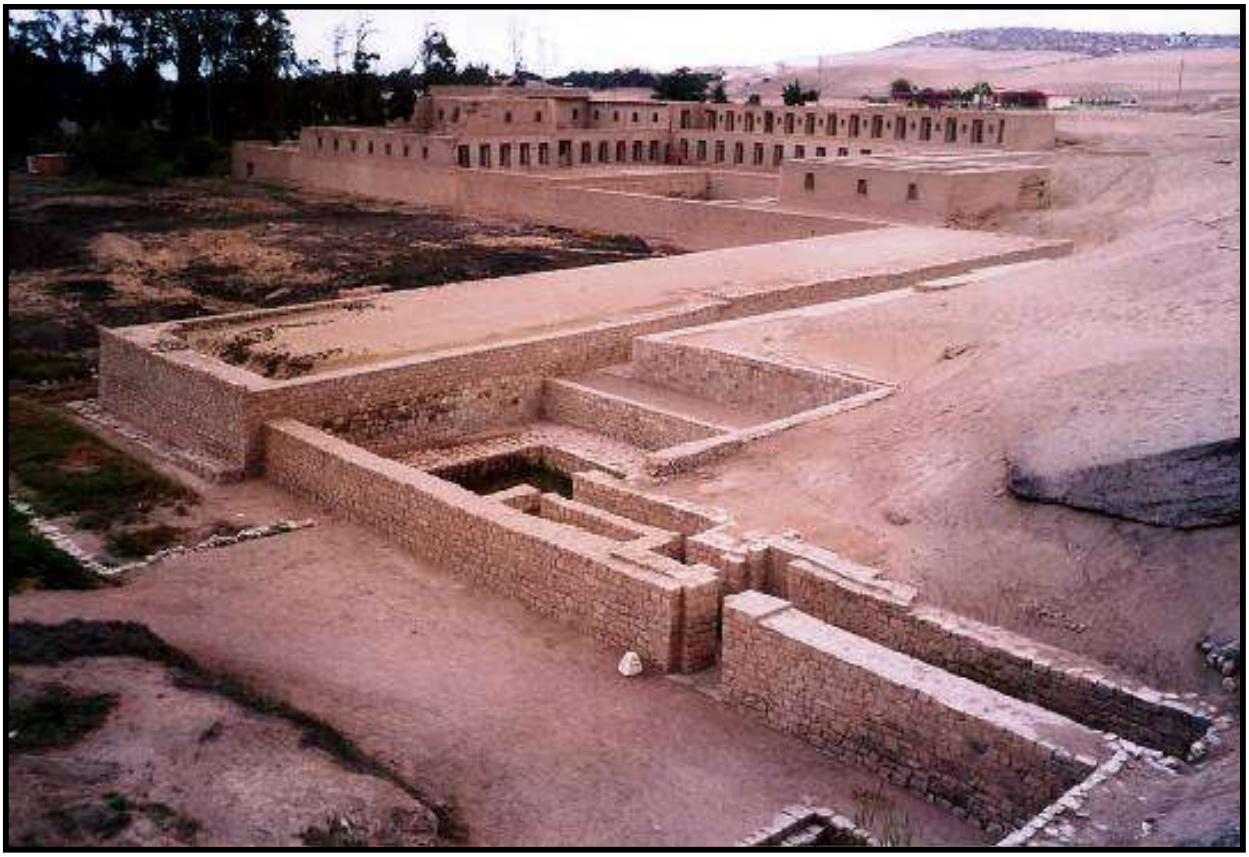

The Inca built Acclahuasi: Virgins of the Sun Temple

By the time the Tahuantinsuyu (Inca Confederacy) invaded the area, the valleys of the Rímac and Lurín was a small state which the people called Ichma., They used Pachacamac primarily as a religious site for the veneration of the deity called Pachacamac, or Pacha Kamaq, the creator god. Under the Inca, Pachacamac was used, again, as an important administrative center. The Inca also maintained it as a religious shrine and allowed the Pachacamac priests to continue functioning, more or less, independently of the Inca priesthood. This included the oracle, whom the Inca continued to consult.

For example, Huayna Capac, who was the last of the true high Inca rulers, consulted Pachacamac prior to dividing the Tahuantinsuyu into

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two parts, which resulted in the Inca “civil war” that so weakened the Inca state by 1532, that conquest by the Spanish was a rather simpler task than most historians, especially the Spanish ones, care to state.

Detail of the Inca trapezoid doorway style of the Acclahuasi

Pachacamac was represented as a “totem pole” like effigy, carved out of one piece of wood, and at least 4 meters tall. On the top was a double face, almost Janus like, and below were representations of various plants and animals. Hernando Pizarro, the younger brother of Francisco (as in conquistadors) visited Pachacamac on his way to plunder Cuzco of its gold in 1532-1533. Finding no treasure inside the room where the Pachacamac idol stood (because the priests knew he was coming and had hidden all of the precious gold and silver icons) he smashed the sculpture into hundreds of pieces with an axe.

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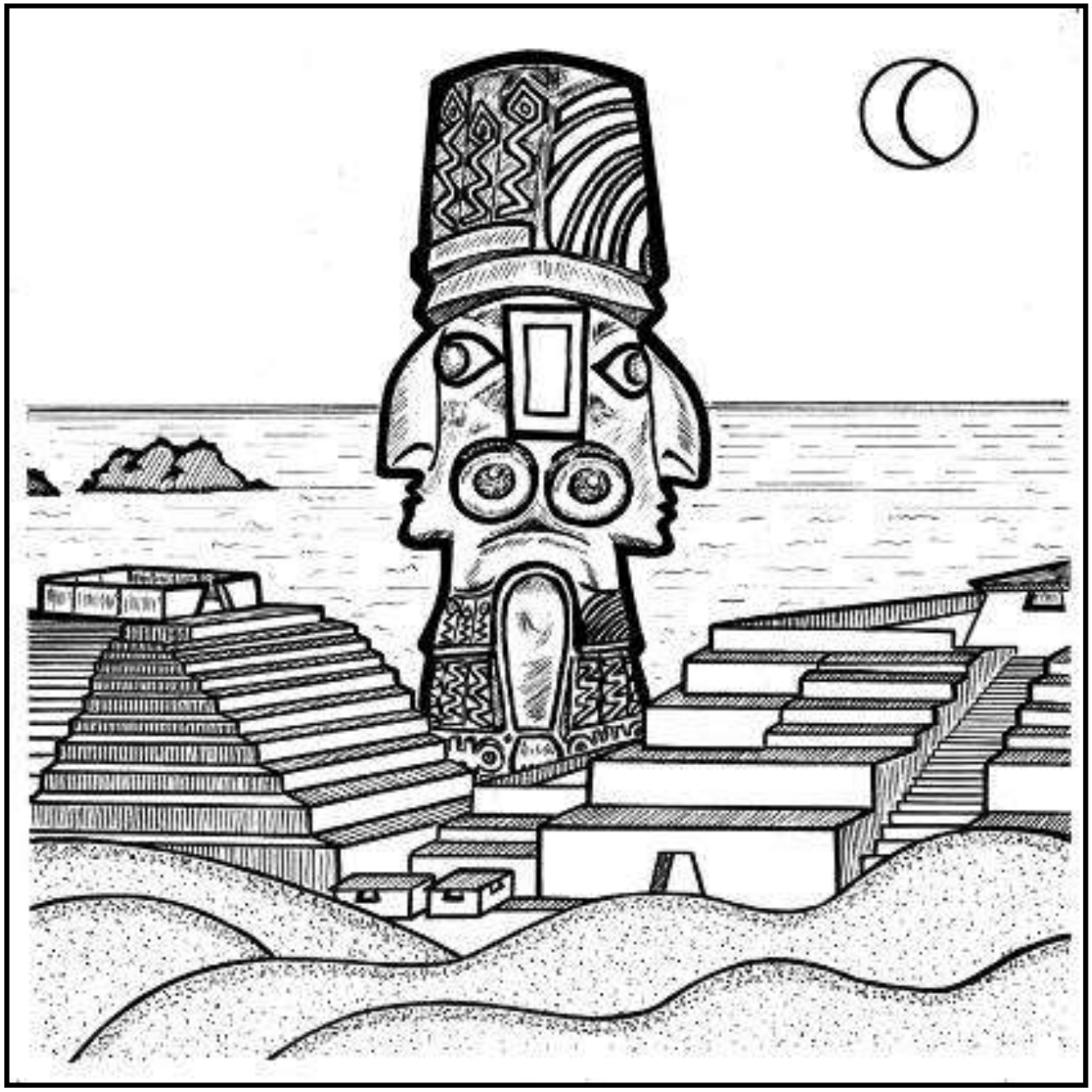

Drawing of the upper portion of Pachacamac sculpture

Some local buses do go from downtown Lima out to Pachacamac, which is now in fact the name of a neighbourhood; but the route is long and confusing. It is best to consult with the front desk of your hotel as to how to proceed.

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Adventures To The North

12/ Caral

There are many areas north of Lima which are fascinating as regards the pre-Spanish culture. Perhaps the most intriguing day trip from Lima, as in you can get there, explore, and then return within the same day is to Caral, a 5000 year old ceremonial city. Caral is a large settlement in the Supe Valley, near Supe, Barranca province, Peru, some 200 km north of Lima, and is the most ancient city of the Americas, and is a well-studied site of the Caral civilization or Norte Chico civilization.

Central ceremonial plaza

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Caral was inhabited between roughly 2600 BC and 2000 BC, enclosing an area of more than 60 hectares. It has been described by its excavators and others as the oldest urban center in the Americas, a claim that was later challenged as other ancient sites were found nearby; accommodating more than 3,000 inhabitants.

One of several pyramids found at Caral

Paul Kosok discovered Caral (Chupacigarro Grande) in 1948, but it received little attention until recently because it appeared to lack many typical artefacts that were sought at archaeological sites throughout the Andes at the time. Archaeologist Ruth Shady further explored the

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5,000 year-old city of pyramids in the Peruvian desert, with its elaborate complex of temples, an amphitheatre and ordinary houses. The urban complex is spread out over 150 acres (607,000 m^2) and contains plazas and residential buildings. Caral was a thriving metropolis at roughly the same time that Egypt's great pyramids were being built.

Dr. Ruth Shady’s crew excavating Caral

No trace of warfare has been found at Caral; no battlements, no weapons, no mutilated bodies. Shady's findings suggest it was a gentle society, built on commerce and pleasure. In one of the pyramids, they uncovered 32 flutes made of condor and pelican bones and 37 cornets

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of deer and llama bones. One find revealed the remains of a baby, wrapped and buried with a necklace made of stone beads.

One of many stone obelisks found at Caral

To my knowledge, no established tour companies offer a day trip experience to Caral. You could of course go there by bus, though it is complicated. Service along the Panamericana highway heading north out of Lima is conducted by many Peruvian bus companies. The nearest town to Caral, is Huacho, which is about a 2 hour trip from central Lima; if the traffic is heavy, then more like 2.5 hours. From Huacho you can

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hire a taxi for the 25 minute ride to Caral itself. I, of course, would recommend hiring www.hiddenincatours.com.

13/ Chavin de Huantar

Chavín de Huántar is an archaeological site containing ruins and artefacts constructed beginning at least by 1200 BCE and occupied by later cultures until around 400-500 BCE by the Chavin, a major pre-Inca culture. The site is located 250 kilometers (160 mi) north of Lima at an elevation of 3,180 meters (10,430 ft), east of the Cordillera Blanca at the start of the Conchucos Valley. Chavín de Huántar has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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Overview of the Chavin de Huantar site

Occupation at Chavín de Huántar has been carbon dated to at least 3000 BCE, with ceremonial center activity occurring primarily toward the end of the second millennium, and through the middle of the first millennium BCE. While the fairly large population was based on an agricultural economy, the city's location at the headwaters of the Marañón River, between the coast and the jungle, made it an ideal location for the dissemination and collection of both ideas and material goods.

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The sculpture of a feline head on the main pyramid wall

The most common animal representations at Chavin de Huantar are that of cats, especially heads of either Puma, or perhaps Jaguar. At present there is only one still on display on the main wall of the great pyramid, whereas in the past there were many more, now kept either in the on site museum, or in those in Lima. In fact, some believe that the “cat” face actually represents the snake, puma and condor symbols all melded into one. The snake represents the subconscious, the puma the conscious, and the condor the super conscious aspects of the mind. By having all three blended together, it shows that the individual has attained a very high state of being.

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The “Lanzon” of Chavin de Huantar

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The religious significance of Chavín de Huántar depends upon the geography of the site. The merging of two large rivers has shown religious significance in past cultures, and thus it makes sense that the location of Chavín de Huántar was utilized as a religious ceremonial center. The convergence of two rivers is referred to as *tinkuy*, which can be defined as the harmonious meeting of opposing forces. It has been suggested that Chavin de Huantar served as the meeting place of the natural and cosmic forces.

The Lanzón is the colloquial name for the most important statue of the central deity of the ancient Chavín culture; takes its name from the Spanish word for "lance," an allusion to the shape of the sculpture. It is housed in the central cruciform chamber of a labyrinthine series of underground passages in the Old Temple of the ceremonial and religious center of Chavín de Huantar. Devotees would be led into the maze of pitch-black tunnels, eventually coming face to face with the sculpture's snarling mouth and upturned eyes.

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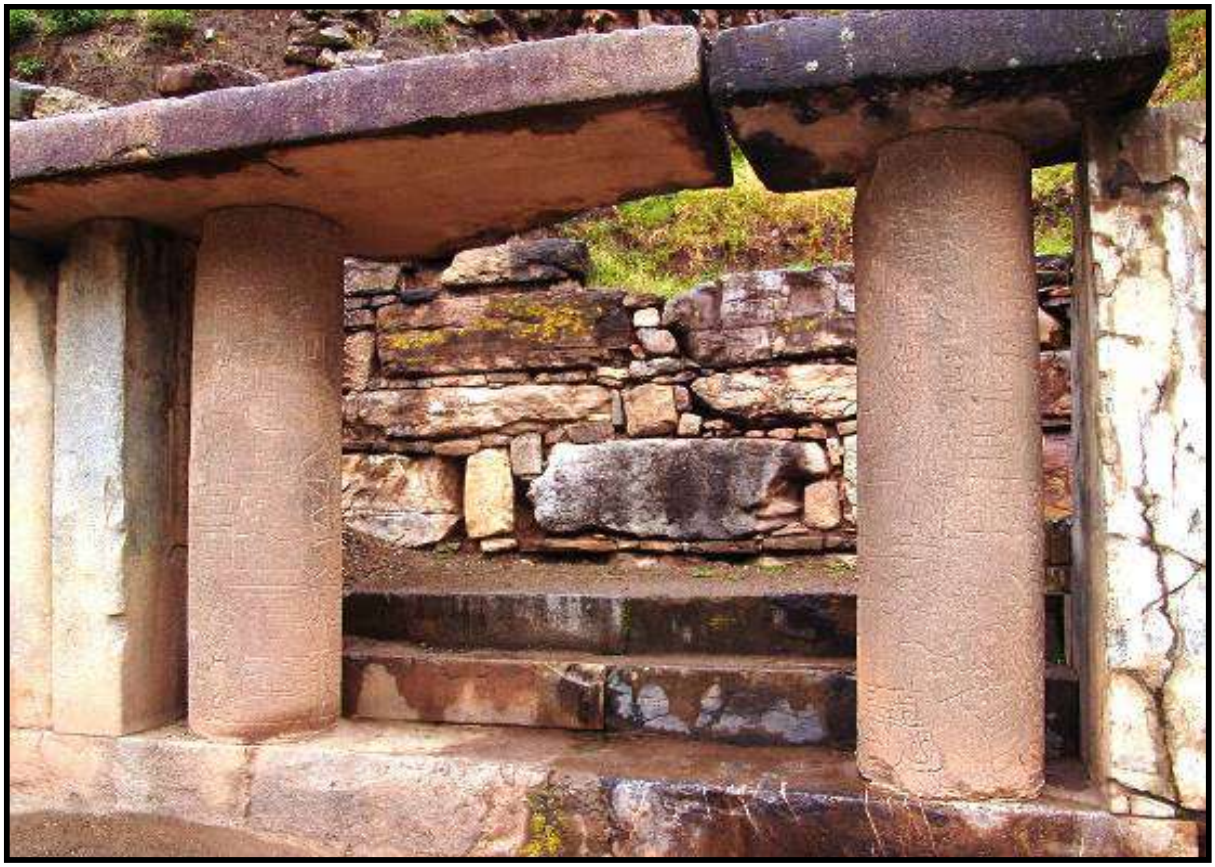

The curious circular columns at Chavin

The two curious stone columns at the entrance of the main pyramid structure are unique; there are no other columns like them in the area, and the stone itself is not local; nor is it of Peruvian origin. Two Japanese geologists that tested the stone in the 1990s could not find an example of a similar stone anywhere on earth…

There are buses that can take you from Lima to the city of Huaraz, in the department of Ancash, which is where Chavin de Huantar is. It is also possible, should you have just visited Caral, to catch a bus from there north to Barranca, along the Panamericana highway, about 60 km from Huacho, and then branch off to the right, taking the major road to Huaraz.

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14/ Chan Chan And The Chimu Pyramids

The largest Pre-Columbian city in South America, and perhaps the biggest adobe city in the world, Chan Chan is an archaeological site located 5 km west of the city of Trujillo, and covers an area of approximately 20 km² and had a dense urban center of about 6km².

Remarkable sculpted adobe walls at Chan Chan

Chan Chan was constructed by the Chimor (the kingdom of the Chimú), which grew out of the remnants of the earlier Moche civilization. The vast adobe city of was built by the Chimu around AD 850 and lasted until its absorption by the Inca in AD 1470. At least 30,000 people lived at Chan Chan, and perhaps 100,000 or more.

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Reconstructed masterpiece at Chan Chan

Chan Chan was added as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986. The city is severely threatened by storms from El Niño, which causes heavy rains and flooding on the Peruvian coast. It is in a fertile, well-watered section of the coastal plain. The city's ruins are additionally threatened by earthquakes and looters. Present-day visitors to Chan Chan can enter the Tschudi Complex, believed to be one of the later citadels built in the city. There are also several other Chimú and Moche ruins in the area around Trujillo.

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Erosion caused by age and El Nino effects

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Reconstruction efforts at Chan Chan

Less than 10 percent of Chan Chan has been restored as of the present time.

15/ Moche Temples Of The Sun And Moon

The Huaca del Sol (Temple of the Sun) is an adobe brick temple built by the Moche civilization on the coast just south of Trujillo. The other major ruin at the site is the nearby Huaca de la Luna (Temple of the Moon,) a better-preserved but smaller temple. By 450 CE, eight different stages of construction had been completed on the Huaca del

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Sol. The construction of the temple was additive; new layers of brick were laid directly on top of the old, hence large quantities of bricks were required for its construction.

Huaca de Sol as seen from Huaca de la Luna

It has been estimated by archaeologists that the Huaca del Sol was composed of over 130 million adobe bricks and was the largest pre-Columbian adobe structure built in the Americas. The number of different makers' marks on the bricks suggests that over a hundred different communities contributed bricks to the construction of the Huacas.

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Adobe bricks from the Huaca del Sol showing makers marks

The Huaca del Sol was composed of four main levels and the structure was expanded and rebuilt by different rulers over the course of time. Located at the center of the Moche capital city, archaeological evidence suggests that this temple was used for ritual activity and as a royal residence and burial chambers.

During the Spanish occupation of Peru in the early 17th century, the waters of the Moche River were redirected to run past the base of the Huaca del Sol in order to facilitate the looting of gold artifacts from the temple. The creation of this hydraulic mine greatly damaged the Huaca del Sol, and it is estimated that approximately two-thirds of the

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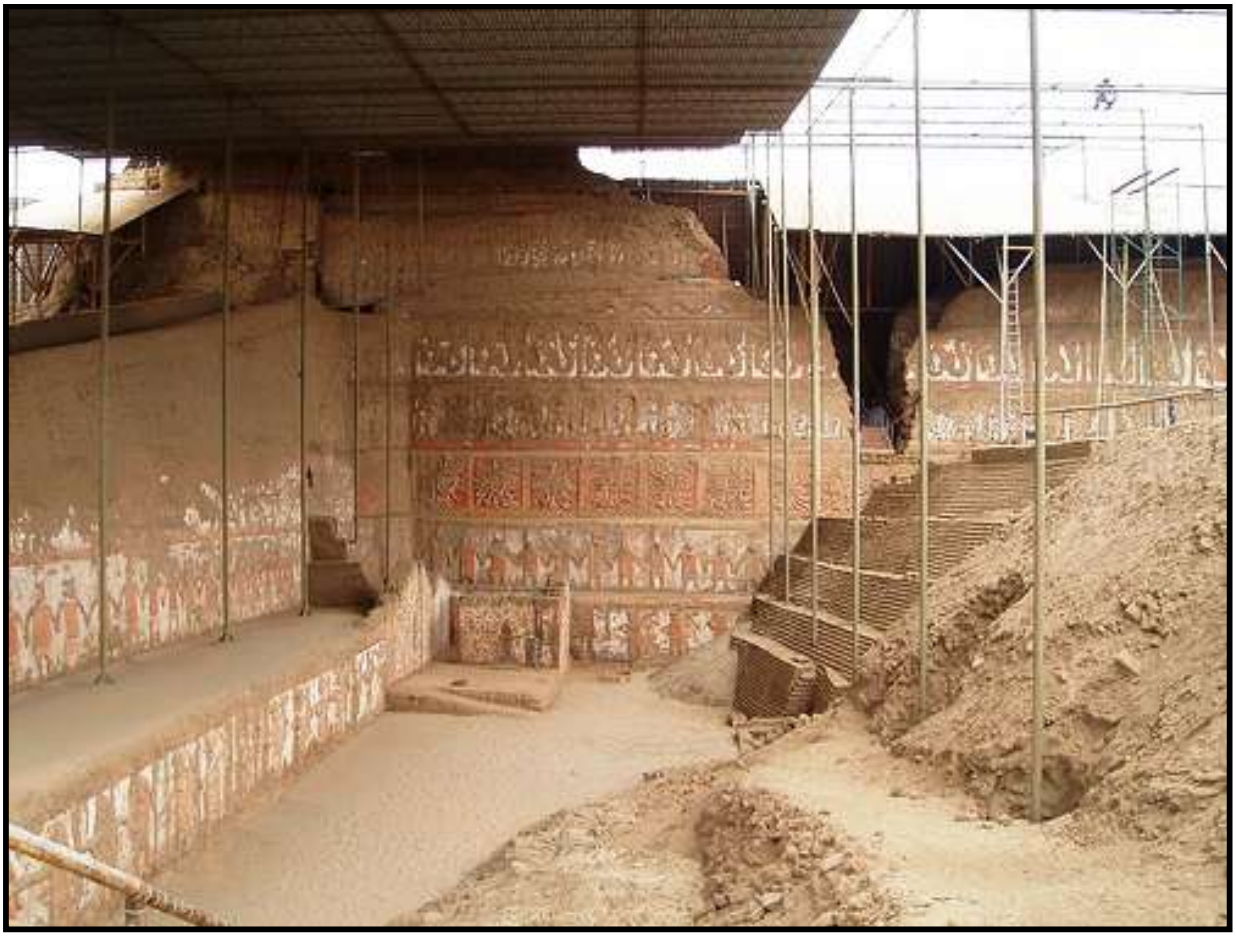
structure has been lost to erosion and looting. The remaining structure stands at a height of 41 meters (135 feet). It is believed to have originally been about 50 meters in height. Looting and erosion due to El Niño continue to be major concerns to this day.



The covered over Huaca de la Luna undergoing restoration

The Huaca de la Luna, though it is the smaller of the two huacas at the site, yields the most archaeological information. Though today the Huaca de la Luna is colored the soft brown of its adobe brickwork, just after its construction it would have been an impressive site to behold. It was decorated in registers of murals which were painted in black, bright

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red, sky blue, white, and yellow. The sun and weather has since faded these murals away, but other murals used in earlier phases of construction can still be seen inside the Huaca. Many of these depict a deity now known as Ayapec. "Ayapec" is a pre-Quechua word translating as *all knowing*. "Wrinkle-Face" is the name given to another deity by the later Inca because of the deity's appearance.

Depiction, perhaps of Ayapec showing possible feline facial features

The Huaca de la Luna itself is a large complex of three main platforms, each one serving a different function. The northernmost platform, at

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one time brightly decorated with a variety of murals and reliefs, was destroyed by looters. Because of this, the central and southern platforms have been the focus of most excavations. The central platform has yielded multiple high-status burials interred with a variety of fine ceramics, suggesting that it was used as a burial ground for the Moche religious elite, while the Huaca del Sol may have been used for the interment of rulers.

Defacement of the Ayapec faces was mostly due to the Spanish

The eastern platform, black rock & adjacent patios were the site of human sacrifice rituals which are depicted in a variety of Moche visual arts, most notably painted ceramics. The two temples are located close

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together, as can be seen from the above photos, and can be easily visited by local bus, tour bus or taxi from Trujillo.

16/ Cumbemayo

The next area, north of Trujillo, where ancient works may be seen, is Cajamarca, located about 200 km north, and inland. Buses do travel from Trujillo to Cajamarca daily, and aside from its megalithic wonders, it is a beautiful colonial style town, and the first city where the Spanish, under Pizarro, met with the Inca. In this ill-fated encounter, the conquistadors captured the Inca ruler Atahuallpa, imprisoned him in a small stone building (see photo below) and then muredered him. The full story of this can be found in my book “A Brief History Of The Incas” which is available through www.hiddenincatours.com.

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Stone building in which Atahuallpa was kept prisoner near Cajamarca central square

But the most amazing stone works in the area are clearly the Cumbemayo (or Cumbe Mayo) water channels, located about 19 km southwest of the city, at an elevation of approximately 3300 m. These ruins of what are a Pre-Incan aqueduct stretching approximately 8 km in length. When fully operational, the aqueduct collected water from the Atlantic watershed and redirected it on its way to the Pacific Ocean. It is thought to have been constructed around 1500 B.C. by conventional archaeologists, based on what they don't say, and was once thought to be the oldest existing man-made structure in South America. The latter point, of course is also debatable, as places such as

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Tiahuanaco and Puma Punku, as well as megalithic structures in and around Cuzco, could easily be far older than that. Details of this may be gleaned from yet another one of my books, “Inca Footprints: Walking Tours of Cuzco and the Sacred Valley of Peru” available at www.hiddenincatours.com.

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Carved into Andesite bedrock

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The name Cumbe Mayo may be derived from a Quechua phrase, *kumpi mayu*, meaning “well-made water channel,” or *humpi mayo*, meaning “thin river.” There are a number of petroglyphs on the aqueduct and surrounding caverns.

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Amazing zigzag sections of the aqueduct

The plain fact is that no one knows who made the aqueduct, or when, whereas the why is obvious. And what tools would have been required for such a project? The Inca were the latest culture in the area, and so

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one would presume they were the most technically advanced; however, they only had bronze chisels and stone hammers at their disposal, and so they hardly were responsible. It is, a mystery.

Elaborate zig zag; one of many

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The logic behind the zigzags could be that since they caused the flowing water to slow down, any silt would be deposited and thus purify the moving liquid. Also, what is even more startling, is that these 90 degree bends also assisted in allowing the water to flow uphill! Quite an achievement thousands of years ago.

17/ Otuzco

Just 8 km from the city, in the district of Los Baños del Inca, the Ventanillas de Otuzco (Windows of Otuzco) stand out amidst the countryside. The site is a pre-Inca cemetery which pre-dates the Cajamarca culture, probably influenced by the Wari people.

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One of the many stone surfaces with “windows”

Hundreds of galleries and individual niches resembling windows were hewn into the volcanic stone. The niches are 8-10 meters deep, 50-60 cm high and are rectangular or quadrangular shaped. The niches probably were originally sealed with gravestones carved with figures in haut-relief, judging by fragments found nearby. One of the many rock face areas with the “windows.”

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Another view of the amazing “windows”

Legend has it that the Incas cleared out the niches and used them as grain storerooms ("collca" in Quechua), redirecting their entrances towards the wind to keep them cool. The niches lead into a network of dark and mysterious galleries which appear to have no end, giving rise to myths of secret tunnels that linked Cajamarca to Cuzco.

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One of the finest examples of the niches

18/ Kuelap

Farther inland, but on the same main road that links the coast of Peru with Cajamarca, is the high jungle city of Chachapoyas, home to many amazing archaeological sites, including Kuelap, Yalape, Puerto de los Muertos and Monte Peruvia. The most famous by far is Kuelap, which was home to the people, named by the Inca, the Chachapoya, or “Warriors of the Clouds.”

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Entrance to the fortress of Kuelap

The fortress of Kuelap (or Cuélap), consists of massive exterior stone walls containing more than four hundred buildings. The structure, situated on a ridge overlooking the Utcubamba Valley outside of the town of Chachapoyas, is roughly 600 meters in length and 110 meters in width. It could have been built to defend against the Huari or other hostile peoples however evidence of these hostile groups at the site is minimal. Radiocarbon dating samples show that the structures construction started in the 6th century AD and occupied until the take over by the Inca in the 15th century, but it was encounters with the Spanish in the 16th century that brought about the downfall of the people.

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The massive defensive walls

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This prime example of Chachapoyan architecture, Kuelap, remained ignored by the outside world until 1843, when Juan Crisóstomo Nieto, a Chachapoyas judge, made a survey of the area and took note of Kuelap's great size, guided by villagers who had known of the site for generations. Subsequently, Kuelap earned the attention of explorers, historians and archaeologists. Notable observers who helped publicize the site included Frenchman Louis Langlois (who wrote a description of Kuelap in the 1930s), and others.

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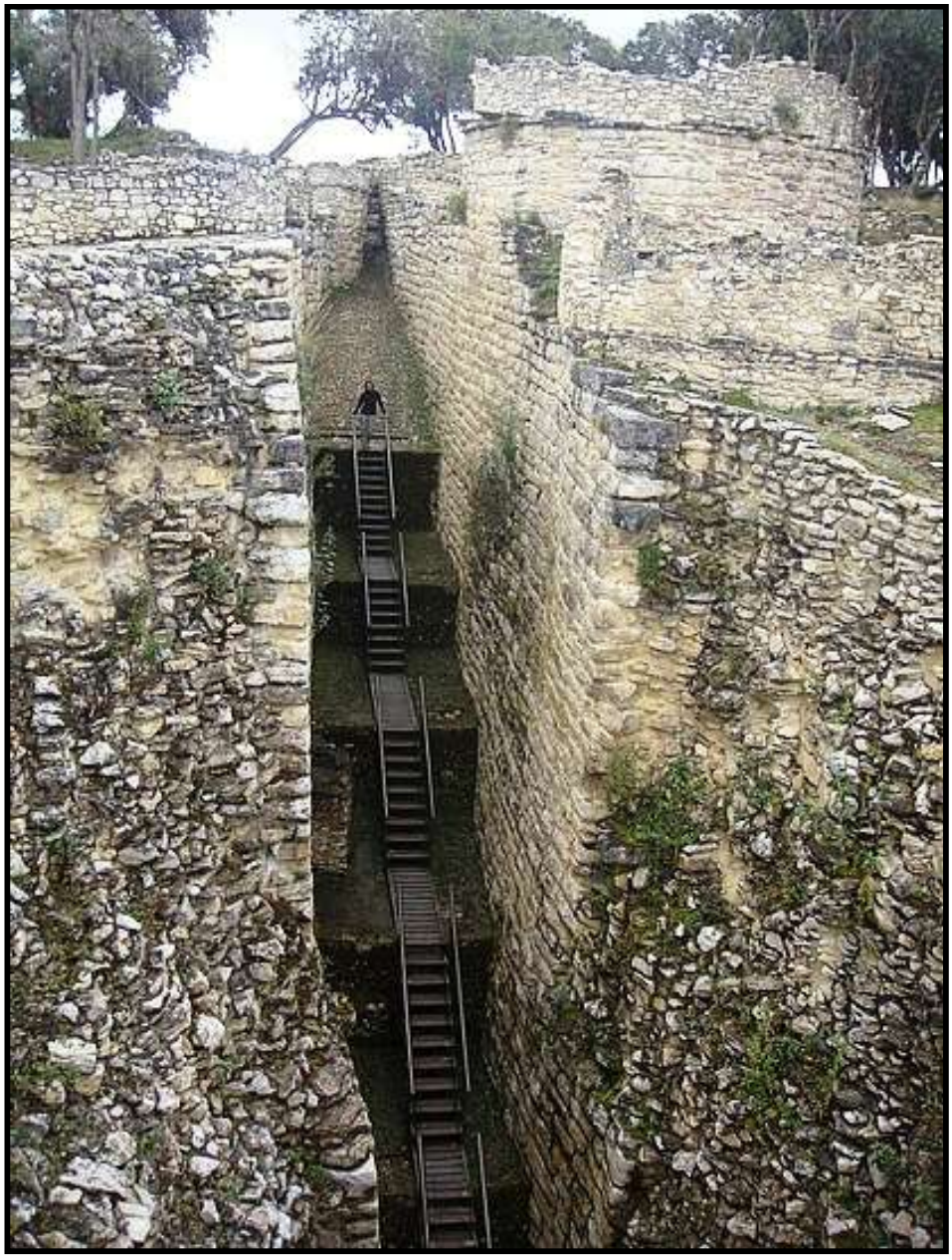

Amazing terracing or ancient stairway inside Kuelap

The monumental ruins of Kuelap are situated at 3000 m above sea level. Judging from its sheer size, Kuelap's construction required considerable effort, rivalling or surpassing other archaeological structures in the Americas in size. The structure is almost 600 m in length and its walls rise up to 19 m in height.

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There are multiple levels or platforms within the complex. Because of its extension, these flat elevations support about 400 constructions, most of them cylindrical. From them, only bases remain. In some cases, there are decorated walls with friezes of symbolic content that, in general, seem to evoke eyes and birds that take the form of a letter V in a chain. There are three structures that stand out from the hundreds of others within the complex, because they are circular.

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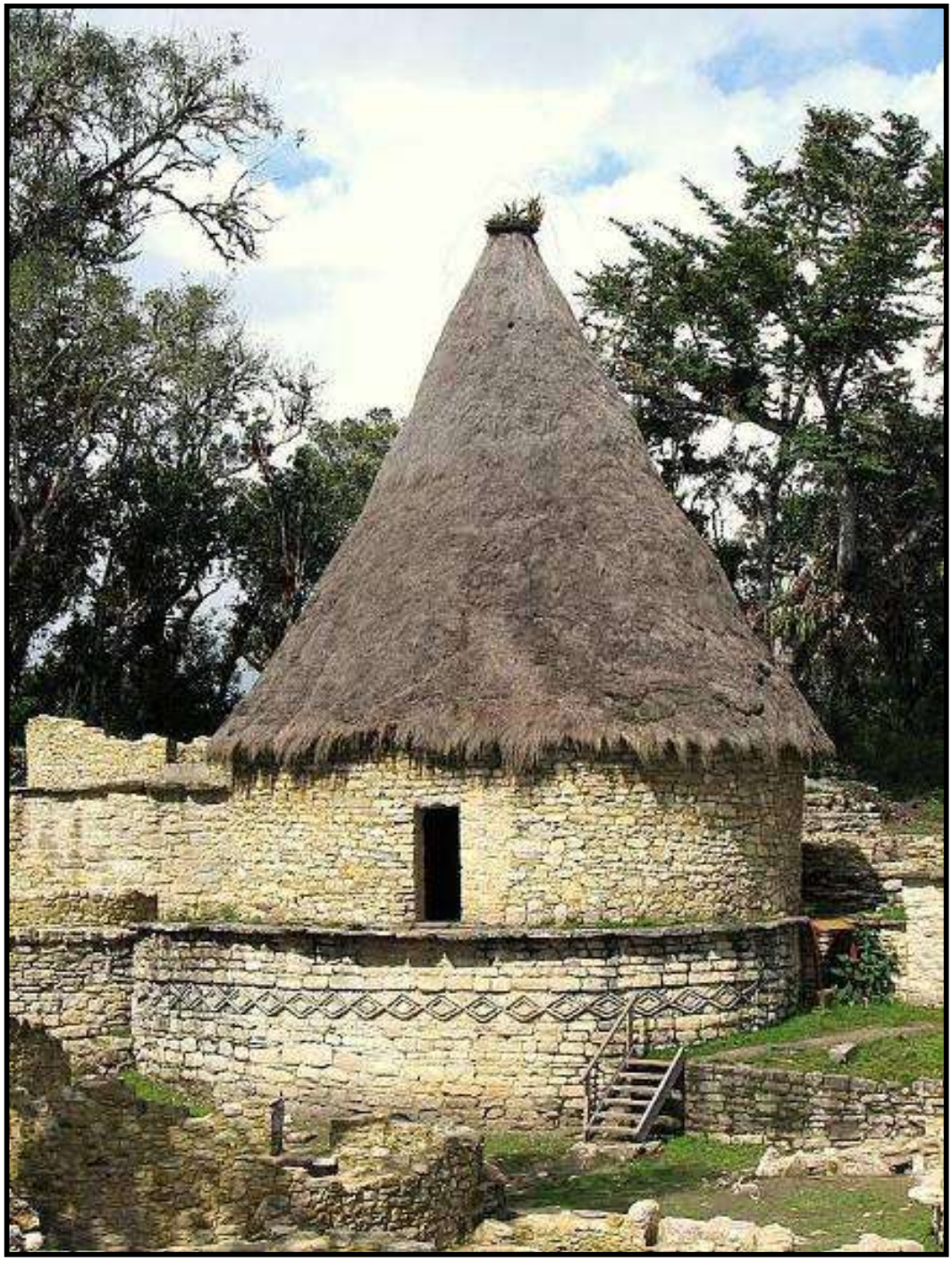

The most popularly photographed circular structure

Regarding the function that Kuelap had, there is not also a completely satisfactory response. Popularly it is qualified as "fortress", because of its place and high walls that support its primary level. It might have

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been a fortified place destined to serve as refuge to the population in emergency situations.

The Chachapoyas also had unique burial rituals

The architecture of the Chachapoyas people was not their only unique feature. Kuelap is perhaps the finest example of their work, a style of which is unique in Peru, and perhaps all of South America. What also sets these people apart is that they are reputed, according to many historians, to have been light in skin colour and having reddish rusty coloured, and perhaps even blond hair.

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They were one of only a few people that vehemently opposed inclusion into the Inca confederation, but did so after heavy fighting. The whole story can be read in my book “The Inca: Before The Conquest” which is available through www.hiddenincatours.com

When the Spanish arrived, and were battling what was left of the Inca, the Chachapoyas in fact joined the side of the conquistadors, such was their hated of the Inca. But soon after this, the majority of the Chachapoyas died of the diseases introduced by the Spanish. The source of their gene pool, as in very Caucasian looks, has not been solved to this day.

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19/ Sipan

The last area to explore of any great size and consequence in northern Peru is around the city of Chiclayo, back on the coast. So you can either retrace your steps from Chachapoyas back to Cajamarca, or there is a more northerly land route that returns back at the Pacific Ocean, but having never taken it, I hardly recommend it to anyone!

Sipán is a Moche archaeological site in northern Peru that is famous for the tomb of El Señor de Sipán (Lord of Sipán), excavated by Walter Alva and his wife Susana Meneses. It is considered to be one of the most important archaeological discoveries in the last 30 years, because the main tomb was found intact and undisturbed by thieves. Tombs were found in Sipán's Huaca Rajada, an area near Chiclayo. Many *huaca* were found showing Moche jewelry, masks, and art. The tomb of the Lord of Sipan has been dated to around 100 AD.

Sipán is located in the northern part of Peru, close to the coast, in the middle of the Lambayeque Valley, 35 km east of Chiclayo, Peru. Four tombs have been found in Sipán's *Huaca Rajada*. This was a burial mound, a kind of mausoleum, built by the Moche culture. Its people ruled the northern coast of Peru from around 1 AD to 700 AD.

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Burial of the Lord of Sipan

The tombs in the area are of adobe construction, of pyramidal shape, now eroded by successive El Niño events. Excavations continue. A mock-up of the Lord of Sipan's tomb, complete with replica head-dress, breastplates and other grave goods, is open to visitors. A reconstruction of the Lord of Sipan in his regalia is on view in the Archaeological Museum of Lima, Peru.

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One of the heavily eroded pyramids of Sipan

It is believed that, as with ancient Egyptians, the people placed grave goods, to ensure survival of the elite into the afterlife. Also discovered were hundreds of small clay pots with individual faces, understood to be offerings made by the lord's subjects. Several dozens of such Moche tombs likely existed at one time, but almost all known tombs on the coast of Peru have been looted. This looting has occurred since at least the Spanish colonial period. Documented colonial mining laws stipulated how "looting rights" were to be determined. In modern times, the government has declared looting illegal, although it is still widely practiced. The archaeological sites are so numerous that law enforcement numbers are often insufficient to protect them.

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Another view of the main excavation

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The Royal Tombs Museum of Sipan

The Royal Tombs Museum of Sipán houses most of the important artefacts which Dr. Walter Alva Alva found in 1987. He helped found and support construction of the museum, which opened in 2002. The museum is located in the nearby town of Lambayeque. The museum was designed to resemble the ancient Moche tombs.

The museum's main attraction is the Lord of Sipan and his entourage, who accompanied him to the afterworld with him. The warriors who were buried with him had amputated feet, as if to prevent their leaving the tomb. The women were dressed in ceremonial clothes. Dogs, llamas, and more than 80 *huacos* (works of ceramic pottery) were also buried in the tomb.

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20/ Pyramids of Tucume

The last area in northern Peru of any great importance, as regards pyramids and other megalithic type structures, is near Lambayeque, which is very close to Chiclayo, and home to the Sican culture. The Sican (also Sicán) culture is the name that archaeologist Izumi Shimada gave to the culture that inhabited what is now the north coast of Peru between about AD 750 and 1375. According to Shimada, *Sican* means "temple of the moon". The Sican culture is also referred to as Lambayeque culture, after the name of the region in Peru. It succeeded the Moche culture. There is still controversy among archaeologists and anthropologists over whether the two are separate cultures.

Túcume Archeological Complex: 1 km / 0,6 miles from the town of Túcume (10 minutes by car) or 33 km / 21 miles north of Chiclayo (20 minutes by car). The capital of Sicán Culture. According to the legend, it was built in the year 700 A.D. and was founded by Calac, descendent of Naylamp. Túcume, or Valle de las Pirámides (Valley of the Pyramids), is made up of twenty-six pyramids, the most impressive ones being the Huaca del Pueblo, La Raya, El Sol, and Las Estacas.

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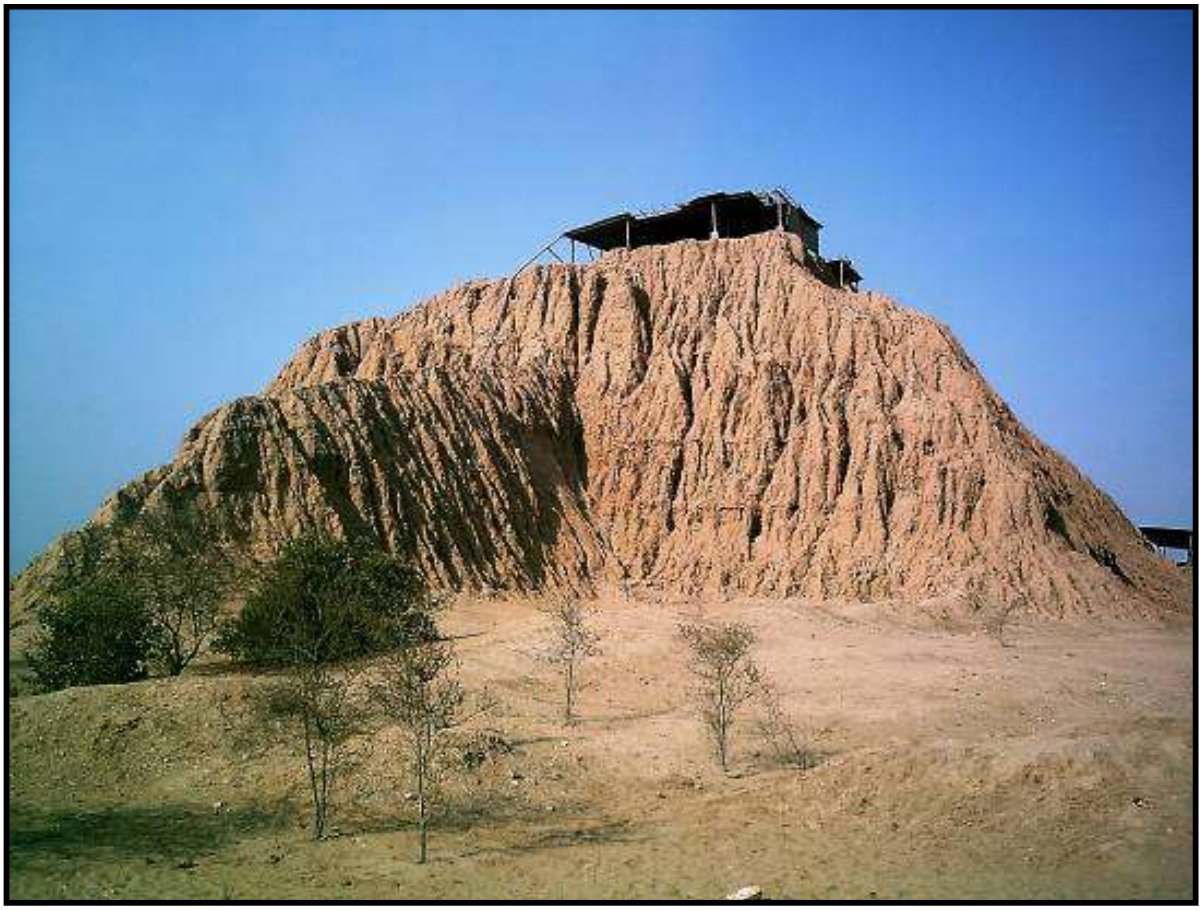

Amazing weathering of the Tucume pyramids

The pyramidal monumental mounds were used as both burials sites for the elite and places of worship and ritual. The construction of the monumental mounds required considerable material, labour resources and time, indicating the Sicán elite's control and monopoly over the society's resources and manpower. They are a dramatic symbol of the power, wealth and permanence of the elite and their theocratic state that dominated much of the north coast.

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These are not natural hills; they are pyramids!

Two types of mounds are found in the Lambayeque Valley dating to the Sicán. The first type is the T-shaped mound, which is a relatively low mound with a short, central ramp providing direct access to the top of the mound. The second type is a relatively tall mound with steep sides and a zig-zagging ramp to provide circuitous access to the mound top. This second type also featured an enclosed structure at the top of the mound, likely for private rituals, whereas the first type of mound was likely for public rituals. The mounds also covered and protected the shafts of tombs of elites underneath. The local people call the pyramids the “Purgatorio” as in the catholic term for the no go zone between heaven and hell. Such a lack of cultural understanding I find pathetic.

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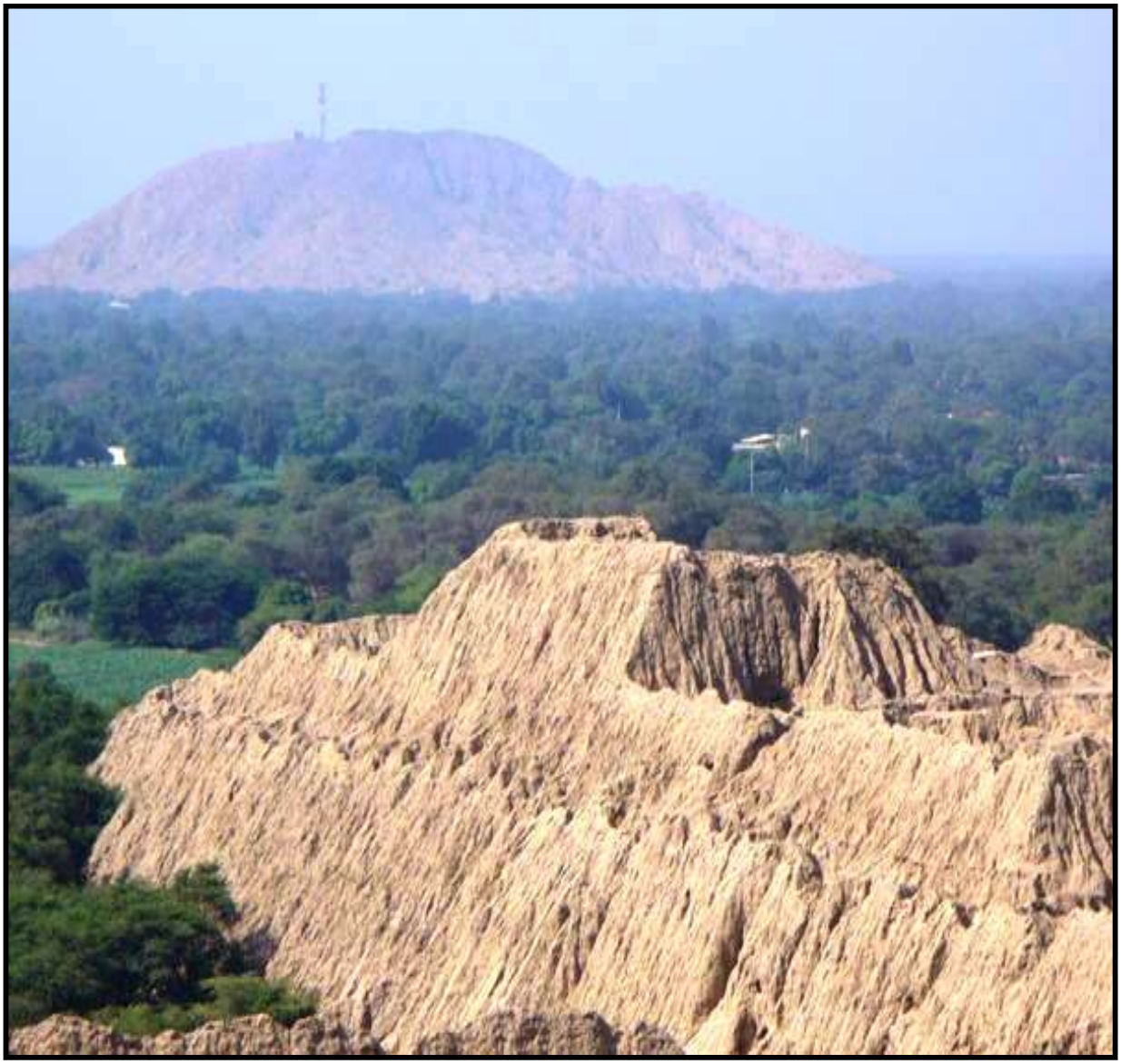

The largest of the “Purgatorio” pyramids

The overall site of Túcume covers an area of over 540 acres (220 ha) and encompasses 26 major pyramids and mounds. The people of Sicán built highly refined irrigation opening the desert to richly productive agriculture. A far-flung trade system brought in feathers from the Amazonian tropical rainforest to the east and lapis lazuli from Chile, far to the south.

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The lords of Sicán were buried in deep tombs, lying at the bottom of vertical shafts. In 1995 Izumi Shimada excavated one of the richest tombs ever found in the western hemisphere. It contained more than a ton of precious metal shaped as jewellery and of ritual artefacts. They show the highly perfected techniques achieved by Sicán gold and silver smiths.

Museo de Sitio Tucume

There is a small onsite museum here, but the vast majority of Sican artefacts are held on the museums in Lima, where few are actually on display, and larger museums, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Such a sad situation that these Peruvian treasures are not at home in Peru.

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One other museum in the area that does have a large collection of beautiful area artefacts is the the Brüning Museum , also known as Museo Regional Arqueológico Enrique Bruning de Lambayeque which was inaugurated in 1924 and it is located in two blocks of the principal park in Lambayeque.

Entrance to the Bruning Museum

There are more than 1500 pieces from different cultures, including an invaluable textile collection and ceramics of Chimú and Vicus. Thousands of golden objects are kept in sealed rooms, including funeral masks of copper, ceremonial vessels, an extraordinary necklace and jewellery of the Mochica and Chimú and pieces of the Lambayeque culture.

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A few examples of the masterpieces in the Bruning collection.

This more or less ends the tour of the north of Peru. Beyond here there is not much, as far as I can tell, of significant archaeological sites until you reach into Ecuador. So, in order to explore more of what ancient Peru has to offer, we have to back track to Lima, and from there we will move south…

21/ Paracas

Four hours south of Lima, by bus, is the quaint little seaside fishing village of Paracas. There are some pyramids that you can catch a glimpse of as you speed down the Pan Americana Highway which connects Lima with Paracas; they are quite obvious, because much of

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the land in the area is flat, and these man made, or man manipulated “mounds” rise prominently in comparison.

Paracas itself is home to the Reserva Nacional de Paracas, or National Wildlife Reserve, which is 335,000 hectares in size; 217,594 being the ocean part, and 117, 406 the land. The ocean environment is so rich in this area, that the Reserve has the second largest concentration of seabirds in the world, mainly at the nearby Islas Ballestas.

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Map of Paracas Peninsula and Reserve

A place of spectacular wildlife and abundant fishery reserves, that is exactly what would have drawn people to live there, now, and thousands of years ago. The climate of the area, in fact the whole coast of Peru went through major desertification between about 500 and 900

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AD, as the result of somewhat localized climate change. This caused, to some degree, the downfall of earlier cultures, farther north that we have explored, such as the Moche, so what we see now in terms of productivity of the land is just a dry remnant of what once was. So the land at the time of the early inhabitants would have been much more lush and productive than we see today.

Amazing sea life of the Islas Ballestas

This whole area, and beyond was the home of the appropriately enough named Paracas culture; though what they in fact called

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themselves we have no idea, as the last of them were believed to have died out about 2000 years ago. This area is quite amazing in that there are archaeological sites literally everywhere; in fact, the town of Chaco, which is the main inhabited area in Paracas is itself on a massive ancient archaeological site!

The first people to live in the area are thought to have been hunter-gatherers about 10,000 years ago, according to Juan Navarro, the director of the Paracas History Museum. He has collected a large number of artefacts himself in the immediate area left behind by these Neolithic people, which can be viewed at the Parcas History Museum, located in the center of Chaco.

The first distinct culture that existed after this is what, again, we have labelled the “Paracas” culture; the name of which translates as being “raining wind” due to the dry sandy nature of the environment, and the fact that onshore breezes constantly stir up the surface of the land. The Paracas were not just “another culture.” They left behind an amazing legacy of artefacts which make them the reason why I personally devote a lot of my time in this part of Peru.

To begin with, they lived underground; and I mean that literally. And they buried their dead in family tombs, shaped like upside down mushrooms.

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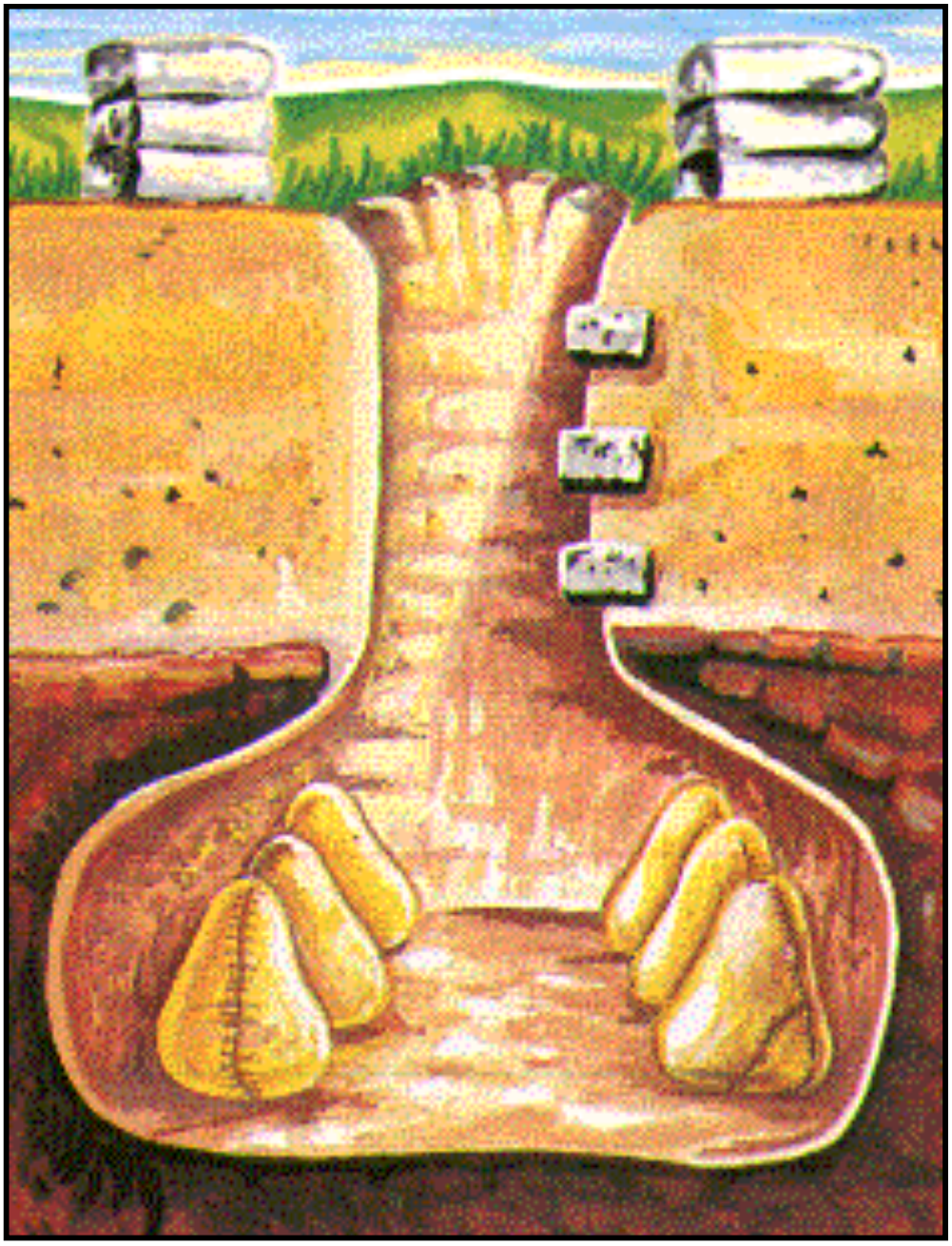

Family burial of the Paracas

The main village site was located on the north side of the crescent shaped bay of the Peninsula, just south of Chaco. It is estimated to have been between 1.5 and 2 kilometres long, and therefore hosted a sizeable population. The burials are located just above the main

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settlement, and the grave yard of the noble classes; priests and rulers, is just to the east, across from the main road that takes visitors into the Reserve, at a place called Cerro Colorado, which is a large red hill, hence its Spanish name.

The greatest researcher of the Paracas culture was the Peruvian archaeologist Julio Tello, who extensively studied the area beginning in 1927. Julio César Tello (April 11, 1880 – June 3, 1947) who was considered the "father of Peruvian archaeology" and was the America's first indigenous archaeologist. He not only made the major discoveries of the prehistoric Paracas culture, but also founded the national museum of archaeology and anthropology in Lima.

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Julio C. Tello

Tello was born a "mountain Indian" in an Andean village in Huarochirí Province, Peru; his family spoke Quechua, the most widely spoken indigenous language in the nation. He was able to gain a first-class education by persuading the Peruvian government to fund it. Tello

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completed his Bachelor's degree in medicine at the National University of San Marcos in Peru in 1909. While still a student, Tello studied the practice of trepanation among natives of Huarochirí and amassed a very large collection of skulls. He was also studying early pathologies in the population. His collection became the basis for a collection at his university.

Trepanned skull, probably from the Nazca culture

He was awarded a scholarship by Harvard University, where he learned English and earned his Master's degree in anthropology in 1911. Next he went to Europe, where he studied archeology. In 1912 he attended

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the Congress of Americanists in England, a group in which he became prominent in later years. It was the beginning of his active international life.

Tello traveled widely during his career, and regularly invited other scholars to Peru, developing an international network. Although he published a number of papers in his lifetime, they appeared in little-known journals and newspapers, so they were not well-known then even to Spanish speakers. For some time his findings and theories were not widely known outside of Peru because he did not publish in recognized academic journals.

In 1919 Tello was working with a team at the Chavín *de* Huantar archaeological site, where he discovered a stele since named for him, the Tello Obelisk. Construction of the first temple at this major religious center was dated to 850 BC. The work of Tello and others established that the center had been a center of complex culture that lasted for several hundred years, to sometime between 500 and 300 BC. Until late-20th century discoveries established the dates of the 5000-year-old Norte Chico site, now called Caral, the Chavín culture was believed to be the oldest complex civilization in Peru.

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Chavin de Huantar, which we visited earlier

However, Tello is best known for his discovery in 1927 of 429 mummy bundles in the Cerro Colorado area of Peru on the Paracas Peninsula. He first visited the site on July 26, 1925, following a trail that had begun in 1915 when he had purchased ancient textiles in the nearby city of Pisco. On 25 October 1927, Tello and his team uncovered the first of hundreds of ceremonial mummified bundle burials. He was the first in Peru to practice a scientific method of archaeological excavation, to preserve stratigraphy (the natural layering of organic materials over time) and elements to establish dating and context. In 1928 the team began to remove the mummies and textiles for safekeeping. His findings and interpretations have been the most significant source of

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information regarding the Paracas culture, which dates to 750 BCE – 100 CE.

Or does it? This is where we hit somewhat of a murky area. Tello's whole theory about the age of the Paracas culture was mainly based on his seeing similarities between Chavin culture ceramics and some of those found at Paracas. As one archaeologist stated when I revealed that fact to them; 'perhaps the Paracas people simply traded with the Chavin…'

What dating techniques would have been available to Tello in 1928? Carbon 14 dating wasn't invented until then the 1940's when Dr. Willard F. Libby invented it, for which he received the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1960. Also, because Chavin at the time was the oldest culture known, Tello must have assumed that any other culture, including the Paracas, was more recent.

However, what also adds to the lack of logic of this assumption is that Chavin developed in the highlands of Peru, while the Paracas were a coastal people. Does it not make sense that the Paracas people arrived by sea rather than descended from the highlands? No elongated skulls have been found at Chavin, while more have been discovered in Paracas than anywhere in Peru, and indeed the world. We shall get to the elongated skull phenomenon in due course.

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The amazing Candelabro, just outside Chaco

Another great physical presence in the Paracas Peninsula, and shown to hundreds of tourists, from boats each day, is the Candelabra. This geoglyph, which of course reminds one immediately of the more famous Nazca lines to the east, is believed by most researchers and local tourist guides to be a large cactus, presumably made by the Paracas people due to a presumed hallucinogenic fetish. Such a claim is based on nothing but pure speculation. The glyph is almost 600 feet in height and forms a depression almost 1 meter deep in hard quartz crystal and salt encrusted sand. It is believed to be contemporary with

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the Paracas, as in 2000 to 3000 years old, but can not be independently dated.

Close up of El Candelabro

Due to its location right by the ocean, it could very well have been a navigational marker for seafarers. Especially during later phases of the moon, when the illumination is greatest, and considering that Paracas is rarely if ever overcast with clouds, such a large symbol would be seen for several miles out at sea. But what is it pointing to? It's length points almost due south, and the nearest land mass in that direction is Antarctica!

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Also, the finest textiles ever made in what we presently call Peru are from Paracas…this from an “early” culture?

The incredibly fine woven work of the Paracas

Very little has been studied about the Paracas people since Tello’s time, and his archaeological digs at Cabeza Larga (elongated head) and Cerro Colorado (Red Hill) which were funeral areas have been ignored since the 1930s, and thus have filled in with sand and have been largely forgotten.

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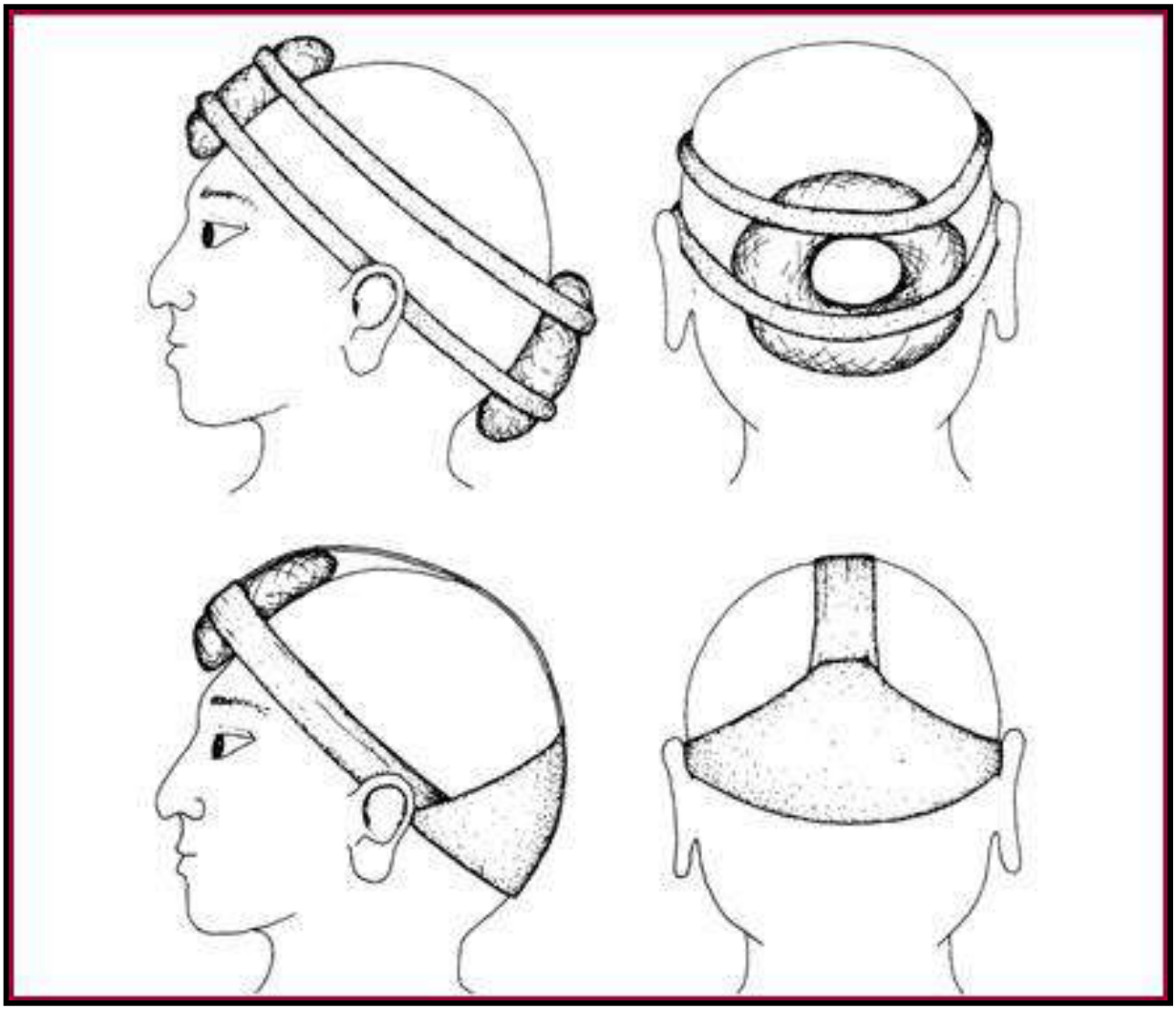
And now to the skulls. The largest human skulls in the world have been found at or near Paracas. They are termed, generally, elongated or cranially deformed skulls, and by some, cone heads. Many cultures from different parts of the world have shown examples of this. In general, the skulls of the elite, as in priestly and ruling class, had their skulls bound as infants, often using string , with boards placed in the front and back of the cranium.



Drawings of possible cranial deformation techniques

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Since a child's skull is quite elastic up until the age of perhaps 3, such cranial deformation early on would result in the adult's skull maintaining the desired shape. The most often form achieved was that of what can be best described as indeed a cone head.

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Cast reproduction of a classic Paracas skull

The Egyptians during the Amarna period, as in the reign of the pharaoh Akhenaten and his wife Nefertiti, his offspring Tutankhamen, and his father Amenhotep III, all seemed to exhibit this morphological feature. So too did certain tribes in other parts of Africa, in Melanesia, the island of Malta, Russia and central America amongst the Olmec, but it is the Paracas that literally stand out from the crowd.

Most if not all other examples of cranial deformation seem to be the result of a normal skull being reshaped, however, some of the skulls found near Paracas are larger, in volume, than these; in fact, there are examples where the cranial volume is 2 to 2.5 times that of an average human skull.

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Skulls of different shape in a Cusco museum

The only examples of the truly huge Paracas skulls can now be seen at the Ica Regional Museum, which is one of the places we will visit after Paracas. Museums in Lima, both the National and Archaeology and Anthropology Museums once had good displays of these as well, but for some strange reason they are no longer there.

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This is perhaps the largest skull in the world

The last time I looked, there were 4 of these enormous skulls on display, and all came from not only Paracas, but from one specific archaeological site, whose name and location I will not list, because it is poorly guarded.

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Paracas History Museum

The largest collection of Paracas elongated skulls in the world may be viewed at the Paracas History Museum, located in the town of Chaco, where I am the assistant museum director.

Since Paracas is right next to the ocean, it does seem logical that these people either came from, or were influenced by cultures from other places. Because elongated skulls have not been found at Chavin de Huantar, they could not have originally come from there. This mystery has yet to be resolved.

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The Paracas people have been shown to have lived, based on examples of their pottery, fabrics, and some skulls, as far east as Nazca, home to the famous lines and animal figures carved into the ground.

22/ Ica

Honestly, the only thing worth seeing in Ica is the regional museum, because they have the elongated skulls that we discussed above, and a fine collection of Paracas, Nazca and local artefacts. It is located center of the town of Ica, and since you are probably planning on visiting Nazca, Ica is on the way, along the Panamericana Highway.

23/ Nazca

Nazca of course automatically comes to mind as a place with strange lines and figures carved into the surface of the ground, which can only seen from the sky; therefore, they must be proof that aliens from another planet visited the earth. That is far too simple an explanation… They were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994. The high, arid plateau stretches more than 80 kilometres (50 mi) between the towns of Nazca and Palpa on the Pampas *de* Jumana about 400 km south of Lima. Although some local geoglyphs resemble Paracas motifs, most scholars believe the Nazca Lines were created by the Nazca culture between 400 and 650 AD.

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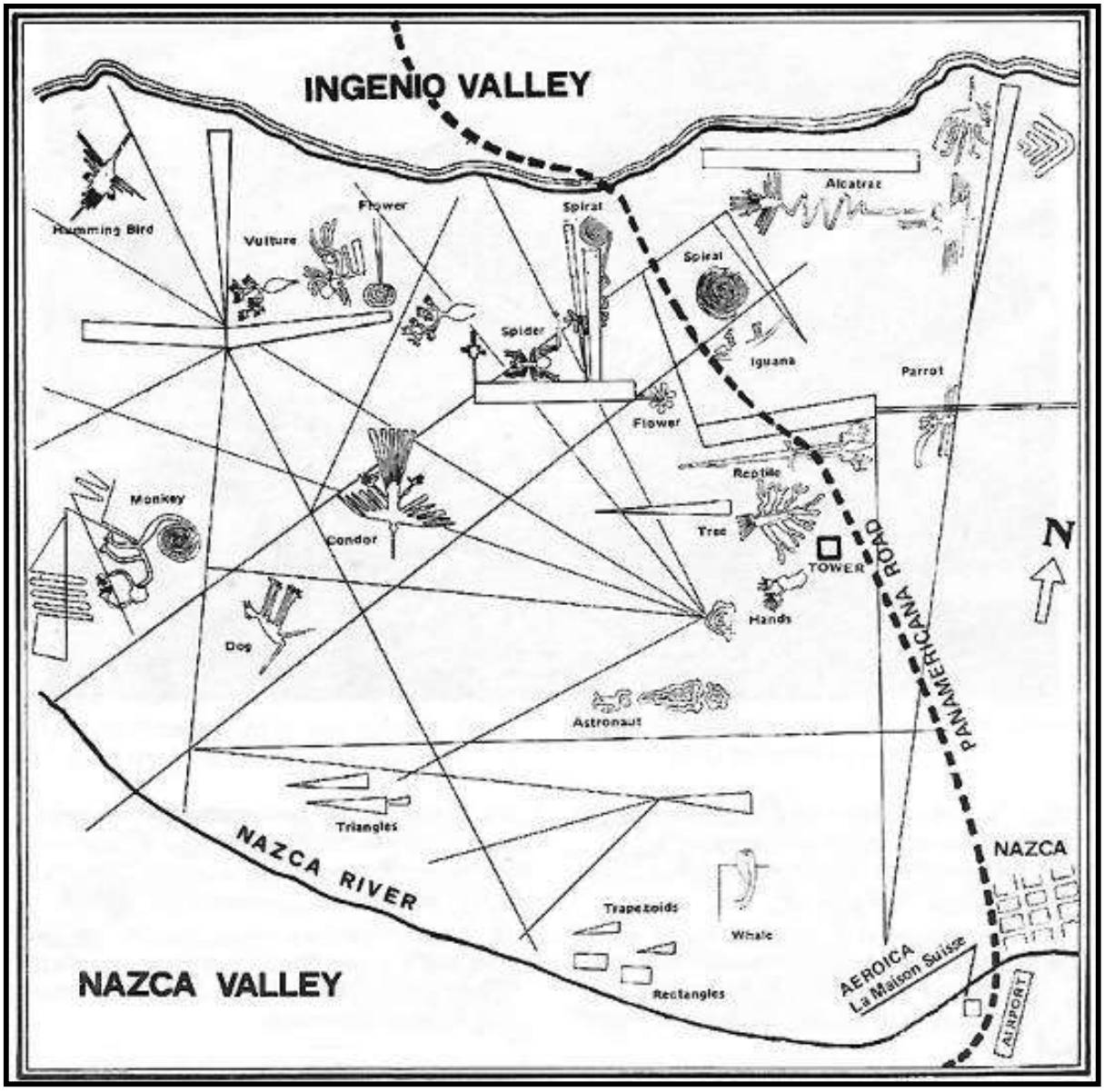

Overall view of the animal glyphs and lines

However, this is less than clear. The Paracas people in fact lived here before the Nazca did, and may very well have been responsible for the making of the animal figures, which seem to predate the lines. Evidence of the latter is that some of the animal figures have lines carved right through them; hardly something that the same culture would have done.

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The famous spider figure with lines carved through it

The Paracas, who we discussed above, are thought to have lived in this area, and the coastal district that bears their name, starting at about 1000 BC, and then disappearing around 200 AD. However, it is much more likely that they simply became absorbed into the Nazca, who arrived about this time. The lines are shallow designs made in the ground by removing the ubiquitous reddish pebbles and uncovering the

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whitish ground beneath. Hundreds are simple lines or geometric shapes.

After people traveled over the area by plane in the 1930s and saw the Nazca Lines from the air, anthropologists started studying them, with focus on trying to understand how they were created.

Scholars have theorized the Nazca people could have used simple tools and surveying equipment to construct the lines. Studies have found wooden stakes in the ground at the end of some lines, which support this theory. One such stake was carbon-dated and the basis for establishing the age of the design complex. Researcher Joe Nickell of the University of Kentucky has reproduced the figures by using tools and technology available to the Nazca people.

The dry climate of Nazca, basically a vast desert, did support quite a large population during the period when the Nazca culture was at its height. From 500 CE, the civilization started to decline and by 750 CE the civilization had fallen completely. This was due to El Niño which triggered widespread and destructive flooding. Evidence also suggests that the Nazca people may have exacerbated the effects of these floods by gradually cutting down Prosopis pallida trees to make room for maize and cotton agriculture. These trees play an extremely important role as the ecological keystone of this landscape: in particular preventing river and wind erosion. Gradual removal of trees would have exposed the landscape to the effects of climate perturbations such as El Niño, leading to erosion and leaving irrigation systems high and dry.

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Nazca lines as seen from the ground

And so what purpose did these lines and figures perform? The most common explanation heralded by tour guides is that this is evidence that aliens left signs of their visitations; that the lines were airport runways. However, any sophisticated civilization from another planet would clearly have anti-gravitational technology, and would not need vast distances for landing their craft. The above photo shows that the lines can be seen from the ground, but the animal figures, however, can't, and that makes them much more mysterious than the lines.

Various other explanations are that they were cosmological figures, representing star systems and or constellations, but computer models

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have failed to show such relationships beyond that of pure chance, and subterranean water course markers.

The greatest supporter and protector of the lines and animal figures was Maria Reiche (1903 to 1998) who began studying the lines in 1940. Reiche became an assistant to American archaeologist Paul Kosok, who had discovered the Nazca lines. Around 1946 she began to map the figures in Nazca. After Kosok left in 1948, she continued the work and mapped the area.

Reiche theorized that the builders of the lines used them as a sun calendar and an observatory for astronomical cycles. Because the lines can be clearly seen only from above, she persuaded the Peruvian Air Force to help her with aerial photographic surveys. She worked alone in her home in Nazca. She published her theories in the book *The Mystery of the Desert*, which had a mixed response from scholars. She used the profits from the book to campaign for preservation of the Nazca desert and to hire guards for the property and assistants for her work.

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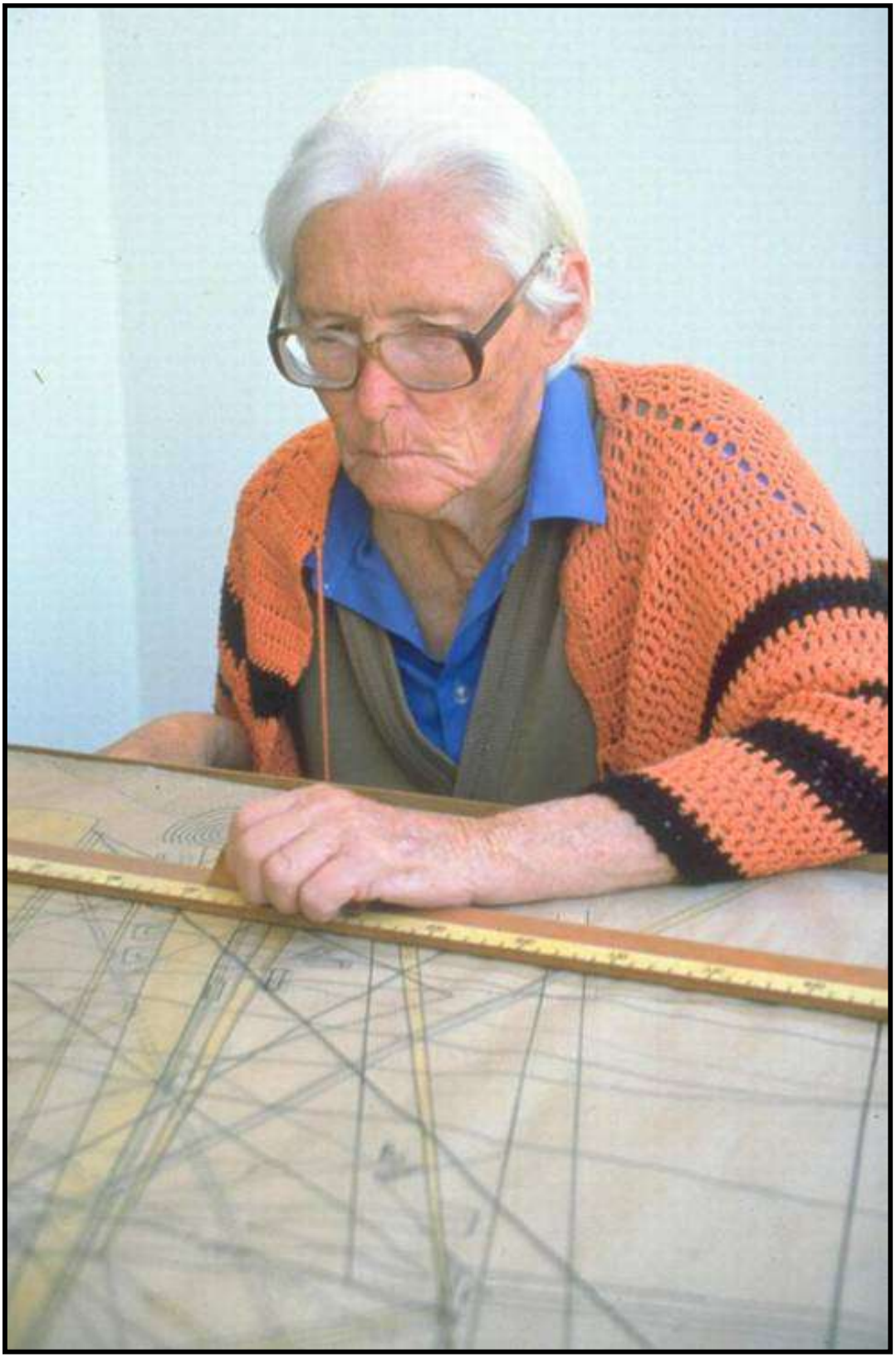

Maria Reiche mapping the lines

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Maria Reiche maintaining one of the animal figures

The most logical idea is that the lines mapped the underground water that travels from the high mountains in the east westward towards the ocean; this is not just a phenomenon around Nazca, but the entire coast of Peru.

Related to the topic of water, and its underground movement, there are still functioning Puquio, which are access wells on the outskirts of Nazca city. Most archaeologists attribute these to the Nazca culture, but since very little research has been done on them, no one really knows.

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One of the best preserved Puquio access holes

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The Puquio system near Nazca city

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Another site in the area not to be missed is Cahuachi; an adobe pyramid complex which is the world's largest ceremonial site (24 sq. kilometers / 9.3 sq. miles), located just 22 kilometers (14 miles) from the Nazca lines. Cahuachi in Quechua means "from where you look" and it was an ancient city developed between 400 BC and 450 AD. It is believed that a relatively small population of priests lived there, based on the lack of many actual inhabited structures, and some researchers speculate that it was from here that the Nazca animal forms and lines were devised.

However, since the Nazca proper did not inhabit the area until about 100 AD, it is more likely that the Paracas people lived there first, and may have been the actual builders of the pyramids.

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The only pyramid excavated at Cahuachi

Cahuachi is composed of 36 pyramids ranging between 15 meters (49 feet) and 35 meters (115 feet) in height. The main structure, denominated the Grand Pyramid, measures 28 meters (92 feet) in height, 110 meters (361 feet) in length and 100 meters (328 feet) in width. The unique structure of the Grand Pyramid includes seven levels, adobe walls and geometric access ramps. Tourists can currently visit the Antonini Museum in Nazca to see a collection of Cahuachi treasures which includes ceramic pieces, textiles and religious relics. There are elongated skulls at this museum, on display, proving that the Paracas people were most likely the first occupants, and builders. Tourists can also visit Cahuachi on a guided tour to see the first restored pyramid

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and talk to specialists who are currently working on-site to finalize the restoration process.

Detail of the reconstructed walls of the pyramid

There is also a Nazca culture cemetery on the way to Cahuachi, which has been badly looted by Huaquero (grave robbers.) This is not as famous as the Nazca cemetery which is offered by many tour companies, called Chauchilla, located 28 km south of Nazca city. It was at one time a vast desert area strewn with bones, pottery, skulls and cotton clothing remnants, but now has been so “cleaned up” and cordoned off that “mock” burials are all you can see.

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Staged burial at the Chauchilla graveyard

From the Nazca area, the next area to explore would be Cuzco and the Sacred Valley. In order to do this, you would either return to Lima and then fly to Cuzco, or take the bus from Nazca; a trip of at least 12 hours.

Of course the vast majority of visitors to Peru have Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley as number one on their list of things to see, and that is of course understandable. But there are, as you have already seen, many more places to visit. Should you happen to take the bus (or car, should you be brave enough to drive) from Nazca to Cuzco, there are two places along the way to see that are well worth it.

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24/ Sayhuite

Saihuite, or Sayhuite, or even Saywite as it is some times spelled, is a seldom visited wonder, located 47km east of the city Abancay in the province Abancay in the region Apurímac in Peru. The site is regarded as a center of religious worship focusing on water. An important feature on the site is the Sayhuite monolith, a rock with more than 200 geometric and zoomorphic figures. In the Monuments of the Inca by John Hemming, Hemming points to a colonial narrative that describes the interior of the Sayhuite temple. The temple featured larger columns draped in fabrics with gold bands the "thickness of one's hand." The temple was also under the care of the priestess Asarpay who jumped to her death in the nearby 400 meter gorge to avoid capture by Spanish forces.

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The main stone at Sayhuite

Thought by some to be a map, and by others to be a scale model of an Inca city such as Machu Picchu, no one really knows for sure. It has even been claimed to be a way to test agricultural waterways, such as canals on a small scale prior to the making of a real system. The author was the guide for American engineer Arlan Andrews and his son Sean in April of 2012 to Sayhuite. There, tests were conducted by pouring water on top of the stone and allowed to follow its natural courses, the result being that the water traveled very naturally through channels carved into the stone. This was strong evidence to show that Sayhuite was in fact a scale model for teaching agricultural engineering priciples. The big question is; who made it and when?

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Sean and Arlan Andrews at Sayhuite with Sr. Balthazar, our driver.

Detail of design features at Syahuite.

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More of the design features and flow orientation.

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Enigmatic sculpted stone at Sayhuite

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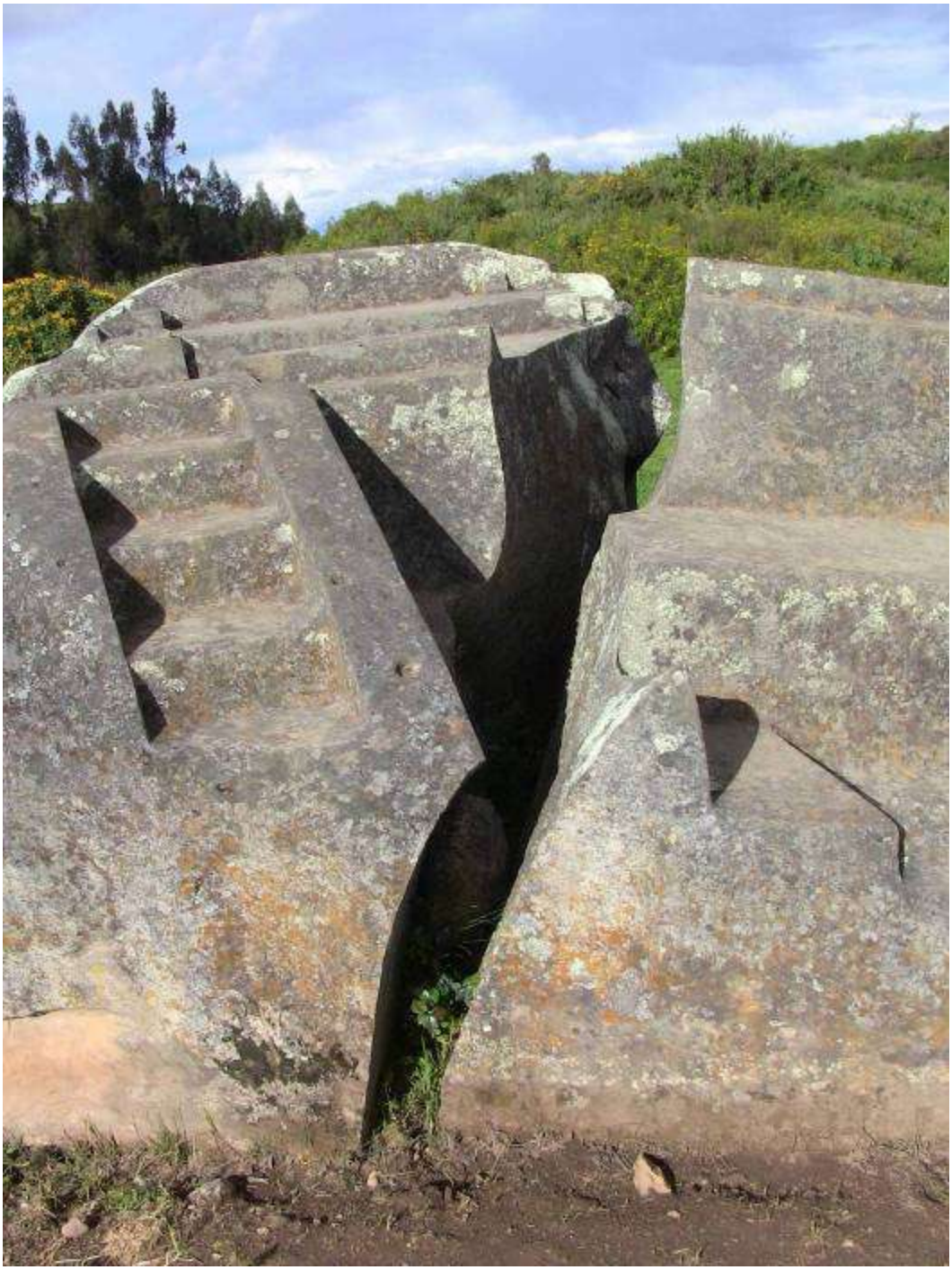

Possible evidence of an ancient catastrophy?

The large carved stone is not the only amazing feature here. There are also two tall platforms with elaborate staircases, and many other odd,

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shaped rocks like the one above. Future visits will hopefully result in future discoveries.

25/ Choqueqirao

This truly is the “other Machu Picchu” and is visited by very few people at all. The name is of course Quechua, and means “the cradle of gold.” It has been frequently called a sister city because the ruins are buildings and terraces at levels above and below Sunch'u Pata, a flattened hill area, just like Machu Picchu is also located on the side of a mountain, name, appropriately, Machu Picchu.

Choquequirao (3,085 m) is in the spurs of the Salkantay Mountain Range in the Province La Convención in the Cuzco region above the valley of river Río Apurímac. The complex is 1,800 hectares, of which 30-40% is excavated. The main entrance is on the same road from Nazca to Cuzco, but the turn off is prior to that of Sayhuite. Mules can be rented from the entrance, and the time to the top from there is said to be about 8 hours.

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The path to Choquequirao

The site was supposedly built during the reign of the ruling Inca Pachacutec Inca Yupanqui, which was from 1438 to 1472. It may have been the last bastion of resistance and refuge of the remaining Inca, the Sons of the Sun who fled Cuzco when it was under siege in 1535. Led by Manco Inca Yupanqui they may have taken refuge in Choquequirao.

According to the Peruvian Tourism Office, "Choquequirao was probably one of the entrance check point to the Vilcabamba region, where Machu Picchu is, and also an administrative hub serving political, social and economic functions. Its urban design has followed the symbolic

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patterns of the imperial capital, with ritual places dedicated to the Sun (Inti) and the ancestors, to the earth, water and other divinities, with mansions for administrators and houses for artisans, warehouses, large dormitories or kallankas and farming terraces belonging to the Inca or the local people.

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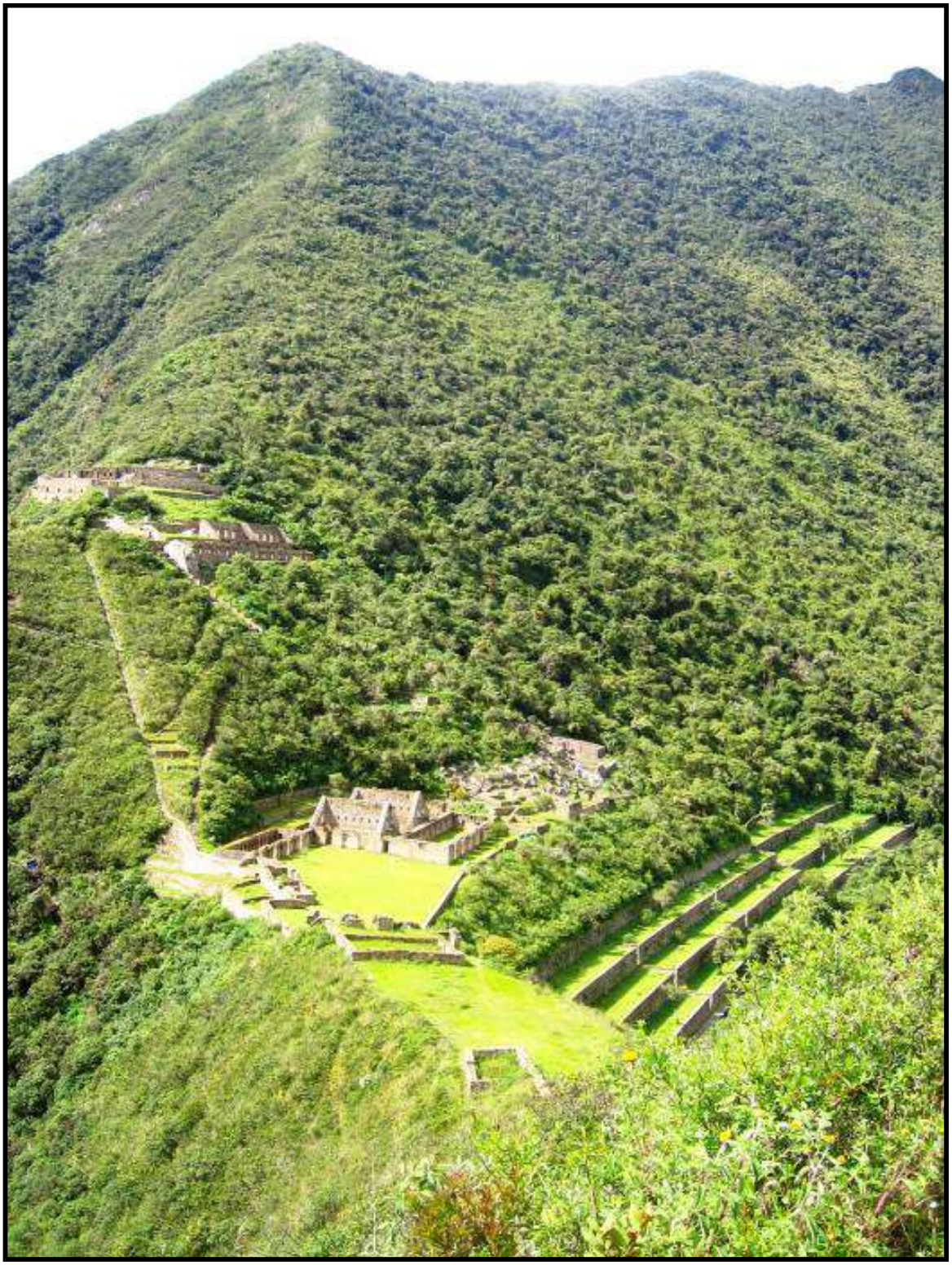

Full view of the main Choquequirao complex

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Choquequirao is another “lost city” that the Spanish, during the conquest, never found. According to Ethan Todras-Whitehill of the New York Times, Choquequirao's first non-Incan visitor was the explorer Juan Arias Díaz in 1710. The first written site reference in 1768 was made by Cosme Bueno, but was ignored at the time. In 1834 Eugene de Santiges rediscovered the site. In 1837 Leonce Agrand mapped the site for the first time, but his maps were forgotten. When Hiram Bingham, the discoverer of Machu Picchu, visited Choquequirao in 1909 the site gained more attention. The first excavations started in the 1970s.

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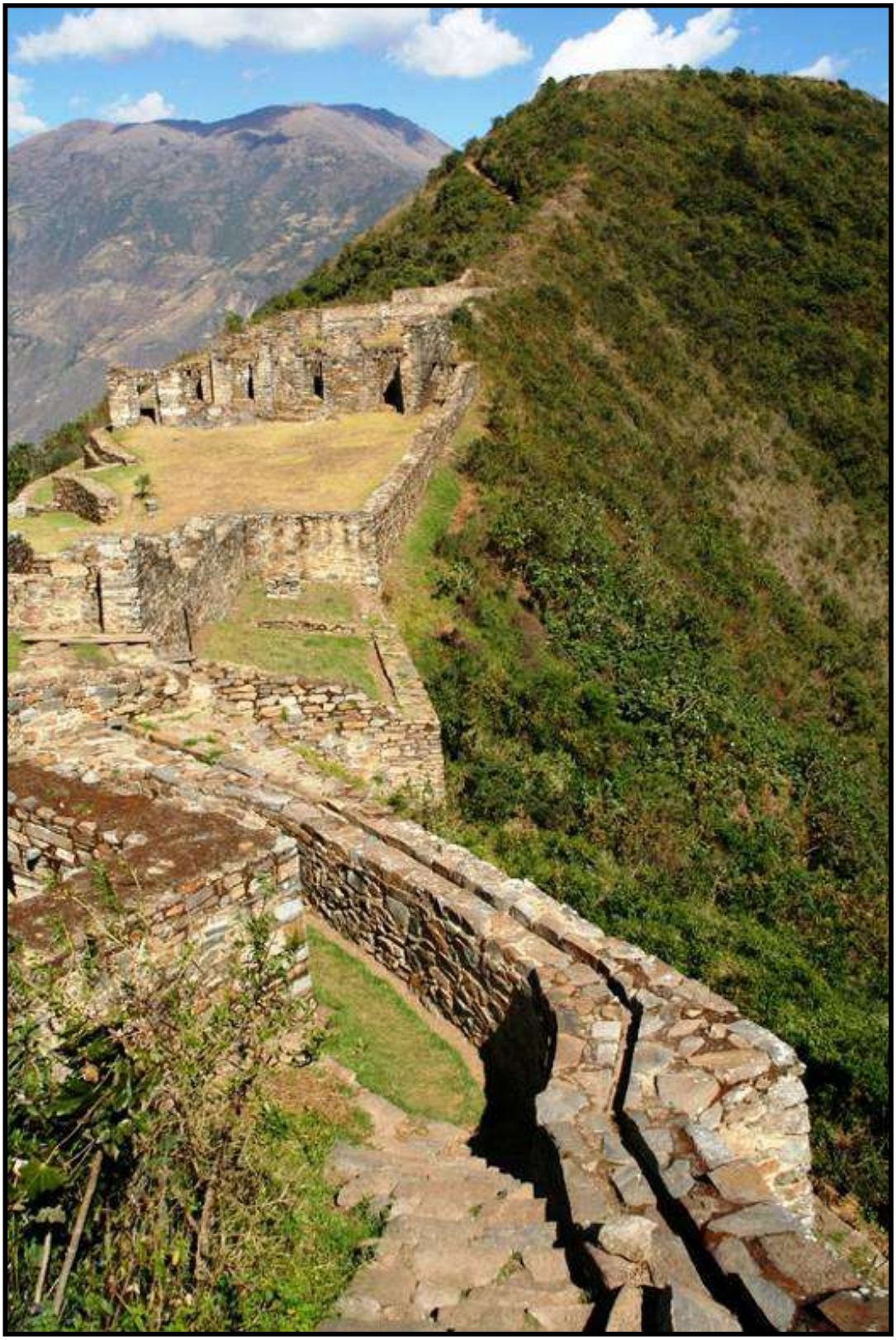

Detail of Inca period construction, including aqueducts

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What is seldom written about this place, which receives about 1 percent of the tourists that see Machu Picchu, is that a much older culture was there before the Inca. The carved stone in the photo below could not have been made using the tools at the Inca's disposal, as in bronze chisels and stone hammers.

So-called Hanan Pacha period construction long before the Inca

Another feature that Choquequirao shares with her more famous sister city are the fabulous terraces that the Inca made for agriculture. So much food could be grown here that the residents need never leave, just as at Machu Picchu.

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Inca terracing at Choquequirao

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The other great archaeological marvels of this area are in the Sacred Valley of Peru, and within and surrounding the city of Cuzco. They are well covered, I believe, in my e-book **Inca Footsprints: Walking Tours Of Cuzco And The Sacred Valley** available through my website: **www.hiddenincatours.com** or through amazon.com.

But if you travel south of Cuzco, and head to Lake Titicaca, there are two very important sites to visit; namely Sillustani and Amaru Muru. Most people who visit Lake Titicaca take the more famous tour, which if of the floating Uros Islands. These islands are made of Totora reeds, indigenous to the lake, and the native people have literally built these islands out of nothing but these reeds, replacing them as need be to insure they don't sink. I however, have never visited the islands, as they are inundated with tourists every day and this has quite frankly destroyed any culture and natural lifestyle that they may have had; they are now curiosities and tourist attractions. Lesser visited but very fascinating are the stone ruins of Sillustani, which you can see by taking a tour bus from the city of Puno, which will be your main destination most likely, as most tours of any kind emanate from there.

26/ Sillustani

Sillustani is a pre-Incan burial ground on the shores of Lake Umayo near Puno in Peru. The tombs, which are built above ground in tower-like structures called Chullpas, are the vestiges of the Colla people, Aymara who were conquered by the Inca in the 15th century. The structures housed the remains of complete family groups, although they were

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probably limited to nobility. Many of the tombs have been dynamited by grave robbers, while others were left unfinished.

The above is the official story, however, there are some glaring errors in it. For example, if you have read my book Inca Footprints (referenced above) you will notice that conventional archaeology makes one glaring error, that being that it is their staunch belief that the older the stone building, the cruder it was made.

Lake Umayo as seen from Sillustani

Again, the conventional explanation is that ancestor worship and kinship were integral parts of Aymara culture, and it is thought that the Chullpas were built to emphasize the connection between life and

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death. The insides of the tombs were shaped like a woman's uterus, supposedly, and corpses were mummified in a foetal position to recreate their birth. As far as I know, no great wealth was ever found inside any of the Chullpas. This could be because grave robbers had already plundered them, or that their original purpose was not as graves at all; they could have originally been meditation chambers, and after the culture that originally made them had faded away, a newer civilization adopted them and then used them for burial use.

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Interior of a damaged Chullpa

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Some of the tombs also have lizards carved into the stone. Because they could re-grow their tails, lizards were hypothesized by conventional scholars to be a symbol of life, and also rebirth. However, the original builders, especially the oldest and most beautifully shaped ones, disappeared at least 1000 years ago, so no one really knows. The present day inhabitants are not descended from the original builders, and thus probably have no oral traditions pertaining to them.

One of the cruder and more recent Chullpa; probably pre-Inca

In the next photo you see a much more finely crafted example of a Chullpa; again, conventional archaeologists insist that this Chullpa is

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more recent than the one above, and is Inca, based solely on the fact that the style of construction is very similar to that of the Coricancha in Cuzco.

The classic Chullpa style, probably the oldest

The simple fact is that no one knows how old the Coricancha actually is. No historical records that I have come across have ever stated that any of the Inca in fact built it. What is more probable, and yet more baffling a theory, is that it and some of the other classic constructions attributed to the Inca were most likely built thousands of years before the Inca ever existed, and that the Inca simply adopted and used it. The basic fact, as has already been stated in this book, is that the Inca only

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possessed bronze chisels and stone hammers. The classic Chullpa and the Coricancha are made of stone which is harder than granite, being andesite or basalt, which would have rendered such tools useless.

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Part of the outer wall of Cuzco’s Coricancha

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The only openings to the Chullpa face east, where it was believed the Sun was reborn by Mother Earth each day. This again is the conventional and very simplistic view written by conventional academics. What they are trying to intimate again is that the Chullpa were burial towers, and that the people who made them believed in reincarnation. What I think is more likely is that they were meditation chambers, used for rituals as complex as the makers of the buildings themselves.

27/ Amaru Muru

This is one of the more bewildering and interesting sites in the Lake Titicaca area, and Peru in general. It has been made popular, especially to spiritually inclined visitors, thanks mainly to Jorge Luis Delgado, who wrote about it in a book. Also, the American adventurer and psychic Jerry Wills has taken group tours there for more than a decade.

It is most often spoken of, including by the two authorities mentioned above, as a “portal” meaning that interaction with the “door” at its center can lead not only to spiritual experiences, but indeed, the “door” can allow an individual’s consciousness, and some even body, to enter it and visit other places on this planet and beyond.

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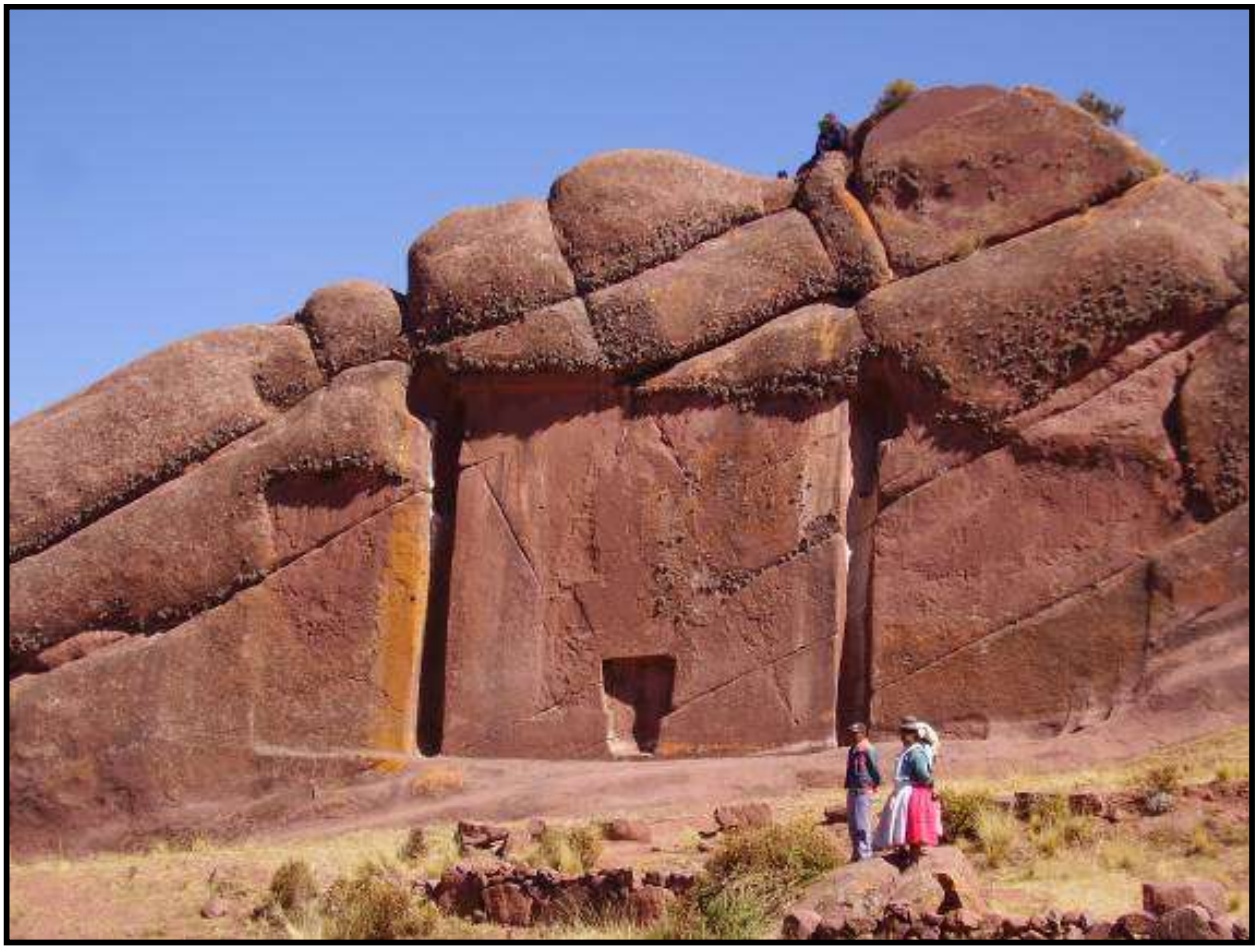

The “portal” or “door” at the center of Amaru Muru

Amaru Muru is located south of Puno, on the main road that goes to the border of Bolivia. It is in fact less than 1 km, following a dirt track of a road to the right of the main road. The wall that will greet you is red sandstone, as is much of the rock of the area. You will, depending upon the time of day you get there, be greeted by a guide from the local village; they are the caretakers of the place, and have successfully kept federal officials or agencies from taking it over.

For a small fee you will be guided around the “portal” and the area, including the entrance to a cave, which is thought to be a tunnel entrance that goes all the way to Cuzco. In my experience, the guides

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there do not speak English, so if your Spanish is weak or none existent, use hand signals!

Even if you are fluent in Spanish, the one thing that no one seems to know is how old the sculpted surfaces are. The local people are Aymara, and have most likely lied in the area for 800 years or less, and Amaru Muru is most likely much older than that, thus, who could you go to find out its story?

New Age authors say that it was created by Aramu Muru, who was a high priest from the lost Pacific continent of Mu, also called Lemuria, and that when Mu was destroyed and or sank much more than 10,000 years ago the last of the priestly class escaped to this area to survive, and preserve their wisdom. Amaru is a Quechua word meaning serpent or snake, and no one knows, as far as I can tell, what Aramu means. This has often caused its name to be Aramu Muru as well as Amaru Muru, and the one thing that these two names have in common is that Muru means “gateway” or “doorway” again in Quechua. Aramu Muru supposedly also brought with him a large gold sun disk, the prize object of Mu with him, which was kept at a secret monastery near Lake Titicaca, then moved to Cuzco by the Inca, and finally moved back to a secret location at Lake Titicaca when the Spanish arrived.

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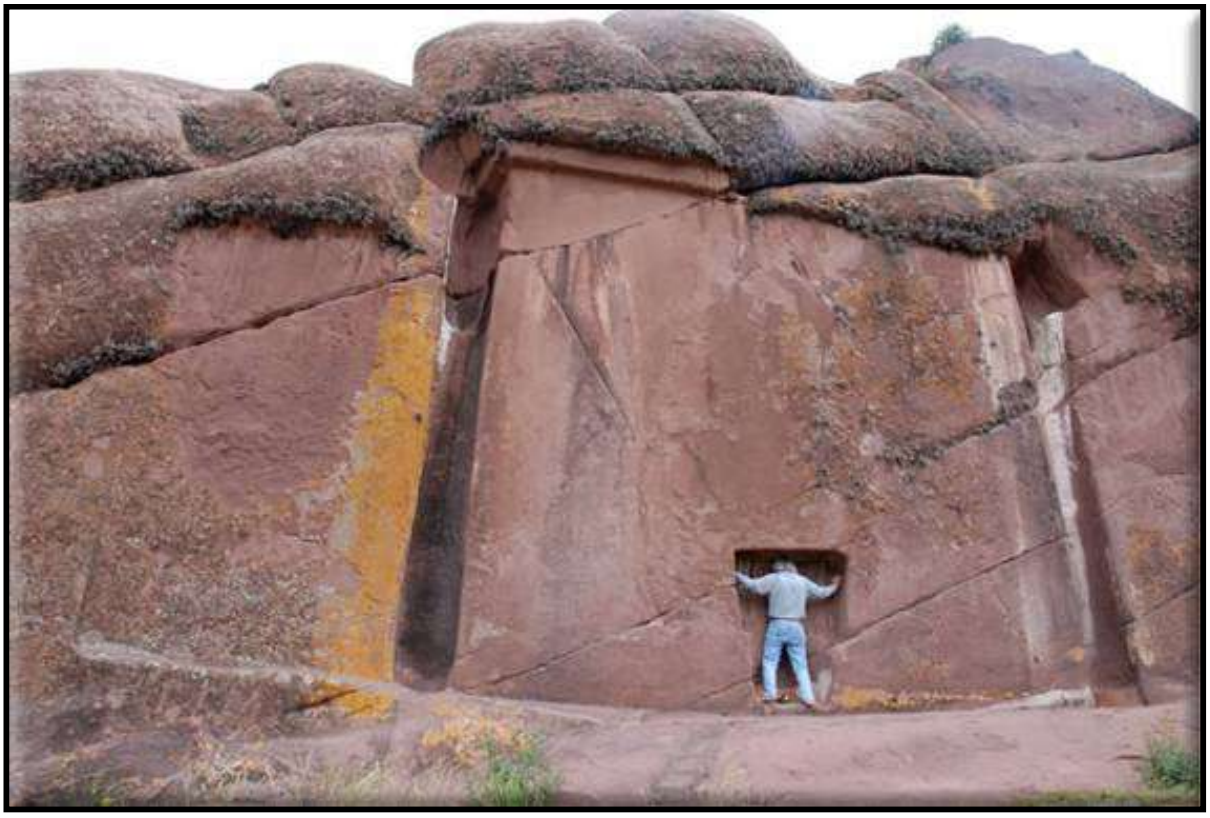

A “seeker” showing how one supposedly uses the portal

There is a small hole, about 2 to 3 cm in diameter in the door which matches up with the average person’s solar plexus charka, or energy point area, and some believe that it is the interaction of the hole and chakra that allow the “initiate” to somehow enter the portal in one way or the other.

What I noticed upon close inspection is that the door still shows signs of tool marks, and therefore was clearly made by human beings, and perhaps even normal ones, rather than it being the work of some master race from antiquity. The wall that surrounds it however is much more heavily weathered, and could have been shaped thousands of years before. The other intriguing things about the wall are the two semicircular depressions on the left and right sides. These are thought

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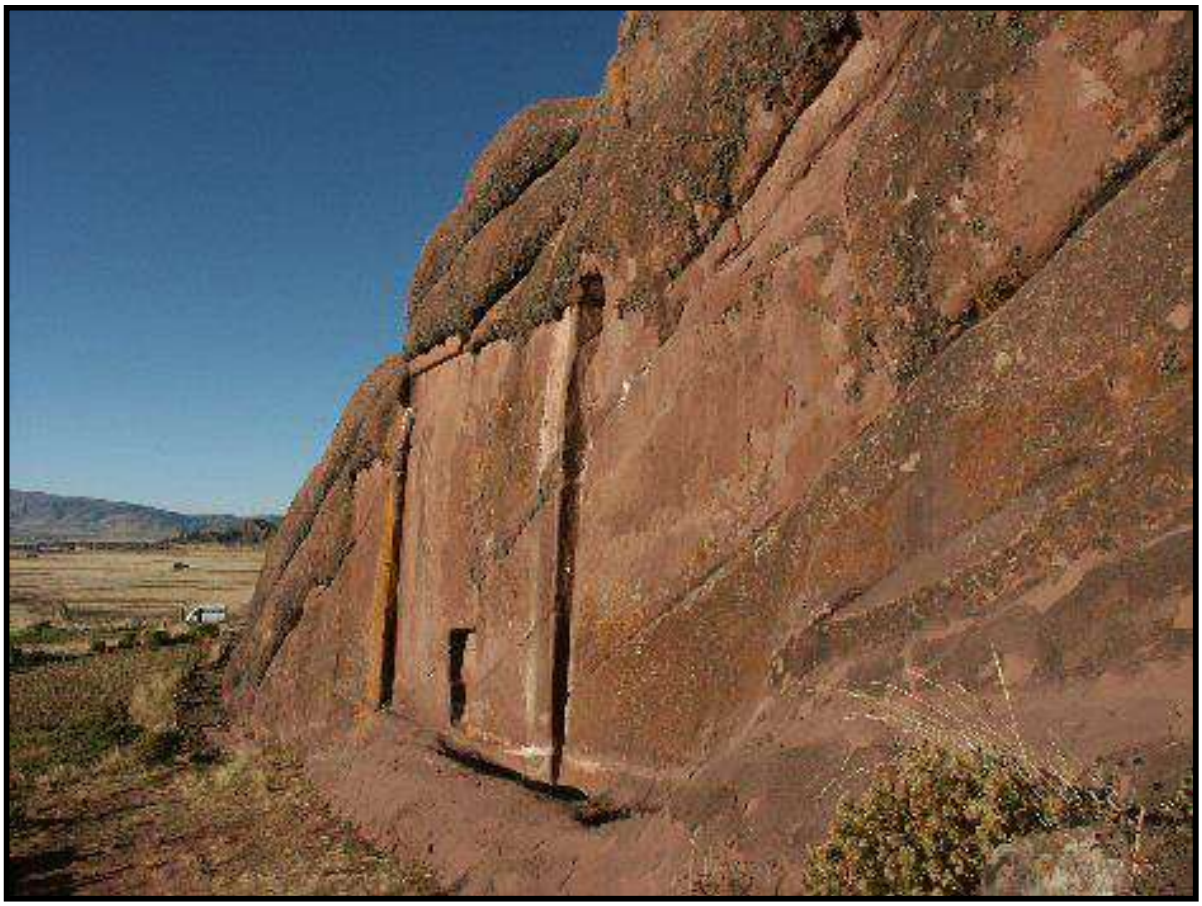
by some to be energy channels, one being masculine and the other feminine, thus causing the door itself to be “balanced” energetically.



Walking from the portal to visit other anomalies

Walking along a trail to the right of the portal takes you up to the top of the massive sandstone edifice in which the recesses are set. Along the way, and it may be your imagination, you will see snakes seemingly carved into the walls, as well as other animals.

This then has been a listing of all of the major megalithic and other curious sites within Peru. Tiwanaku, also written as Tiahuanaco, as well as Puma Punku are across the Bolivian border, and hence are not

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covered in this book. I thank you for your interest in reading this, and if you have questions or suggestions of places that have not been covered, please feel free to contact me at: shipibospirit@hotmail.com

Hidden Inca Tours

Along with my wife, Irene Flores, I operate Hidden Inca Tours based in Cusco, Peru. Our operations began nearly a decade ago as a way to facilitate my long-term research into megalithic sites and ancient wisdom. We work with leading experts, geologists, engineers, & the holders of oral traditions to investigate megalithic sites without bias. Participation in one of our tours feels like joining an informal research expedition with knowledgeable friends. Over the years our offerings have grown to an annual series of major group tours as well as private guided tours with me to ancient sites in Peru and Bolivia.

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